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A Self-Taught Trade

Advice to Young Writers, from Two Recent Autobiographies

BY STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

TIME brings its revenges and, somehow or other, the characterization of Mr. Maugham, by his publishers, on the jacket of his last book, as "the dean of living English novelists," brings with it a certain sense of shock. For the record is there for anybody to look at—and yet deans are deans. They may be bland or irate—great men or small—but it is a little difficult to see Mr. Maugham in that particular cabbage-patch. It is rather like calling a very efficient tiger the oldest lion in the zoo.

For Mr. Maugham is that anomaly among English novelists—a professional writer who has known the precise uses of his skill and thought a great deal about its exercise. He has seldom tried to be lyric, he has never been a reformer. He has never, to my knowledge, pulled out either the patriotic or the sentimental stop. The love of the English countryside, the humors of rustics, the rambling roominess of the English novel—these are absent from his work in great quantities. Yet he has been able, in his greatest book, to portray human passion, aspiration, and defeat, and to do so without cant or exaggeration. That is a good deal for any writer to have done.

Now, most young writers have a burning desire to know how the trick is done—or any part of it. But there are very few ways of their finding out, for writing is a self-taught trade. And few textbooks on the subject give anything worth the getting. They do not because their authors lack, for the most part, one essential—an individual creative impulse sufficiently strong to write, successfully, other things besides textbooks. But when a skilled man talks about his own ways of work, with candor, he is always worth listening to, even if you intend to do an entirely different sort of work yourself.

There has not been very much of that sort of talk in English letters since Fielding's prefatory essays in "Tom Jones"—talk at once instructed and wise. And, on the whole, the poets have done rather better at it than the prose writers. But, among the recent books of autobiography or semi-autobiography, there are two

MAUGHAM IN 1911, *four years before "Of Human Bondage." Painting by Gerald Kelly.*

which, it seems to me, would be extremely valuable to any young writer. One is Maugham's "The Summing Up" and the other is Kipling's "Something of Myself."

To say so is neither to compare the two books and the two men—nor to say that, by reading them, you will immediately be able to write "Of Human Bondage" or "Puck of Pook's Hill" in five easy lessons. But both books have one thing which most textbooks lack—the actual, professional point of view of the professional writer, and—less in Kipling, more in Maugham—a good deal of description of the actual work involved in becoming a writer at all. For most of us begin by thinking we can do it all on desire, and are horribly disappointed when we fail. The drawer in the table sticks—the house is lopsided—and yet we had such a fine idea of a house. Why didn't it turn out like that—isn't writing just a business of putting down a number of words on paper? Well, no, it is a little more than that—and why it is more than that, both books very clearly show.

Sometimes, too, they say the same things—or their approximate—and it is interesting to note the likeness. It is interesting to compare Kipling's "Mercifully, the mere act of writing was, and always has been, a physical pleasure to me," with Maugham's "When I began to write I did so as though it were the most natural thing in the world. I took to it as a duck takes to water;"—to compare again Kipling's statement, "There is no line of my verse or prose which has not been mouthed till the tongue has made all smooth and memory, after many recitals, has mechanically skipped the grosser superfluities," with Maugham's "I had a logical sense, and if no great feeling for the richness and strangeness of words, at all events a lively appreciation of their sound . . . it seemed to me that I must aim at lucidity, simplicity and euphony." I should like to underline the word "sound" in the Maugham paragraph—otherwise the reader might miss it, and there are too many tone-deaf writers as it is. It would be interesting, too, to compare the identical advice that these two very different writers give about "following up a success." The advice, by the way, is "Don't," and it is worth heeding, in spite of editors and publishers. And, some day, a graduate student may trace the French influence upon both of them—and discuss the whole field of the short story. For the moment, it is enough to say that both give professional advice, the kind of advice you can only get from the tried craftsman. Let us get back to Mr. Maugham and "The Summing Up."

A body of work, an *œuvre*, is the result of long-continued and resolute effort.

The writer is free to work in whatever place and at whatever time he

Next Week

SLEEP IN PEACE
By PHYLLIS BENTLEY
Reviewed by Howard Mumford Jones

DAUGHTERS AND SONS
By I. COMPTON-BURNETT
Reviewed by George Dangerfield

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chooses; he is free to be idle if he feels ill or dispirited. But it is a profession that has disadvantages. One is that though the whole world, with everyone in it and all its sights and events, is your material, you yourself can only deal with what corresponds to some secret spring in your own nature. The mine is incalculably rich, but each one of us can get from it only a definite amount of ore.

The writer does not copy his originals; he takes what he wants from them, a few traits that have caught his attention, a turn of mind that has fired his imagination, and therefrom constructs his character. He is not concerned whether it is a truthful likeness; he is concerned only to create a plausible harmony convenient for his own purposes. So different may be the finished product from the original that it must be a common experience of authors to be accused of having drawn a lifelike portrait of a certain person when they had in mind someone quite different.

I am doing violence, of course, to "The Summing Up" by quoting such individual passages as the above. But they are worth thinking about—not only for the beginning writer. And the whole book gives a picture of the progress and development of a craftsman that is truly remarkable in its intellectual frankness.

Mr. Maugham has written for money, he has written for fame. He has also and essentially written because he had to write—and he scamps neither aspect of his career. The gifts of the gods were not handed to him on a silver platter—he began with "a natural lucidity and a knack for writing easy dialogue." But he remarks of himself unsparingly "My language was commonplace, my vocabulary limited, my grammar shaky and my phrases hackneyed." We can all recognize ourselves in that horrid little description—what is more important, perhaps, for the young writer, is that Mr. Maugham was able to recognize it and then go on. In other words, he did not sit down and consider himself an unappreciated genius on the ground of his defects. He worked. He tried for a florid prose and richness of texture—he studied the Song of Solomon and Jeremy Taylor. They were highly recommended but they didn't happen to fit him. And, having learned his first lesson—that the admired style of the period is not always the one for you—he worked. He made an unexpected success with a novel and thought his fortune was made. It was not. He turned to writing plays—had a *succès d'estime* with one, but had to wait ten years and write six others, before his first sensational success as a dramatist came. Well, there are a good many writers who would like that sort of success—four plays running in London at once and three of them substantial hits. But it is not done by telling other writers that you have a wonderful idea for a play.

Yes, "The Summing Up" is worth studying—worth studying if it contained nothing more than the few pages that

Keystone-Underwood

RUDYARD KIPLING

concern the writing of "Of Human Bondage." For, when it was written, Mr. Maugham had both money and fame. He could have gone on as a playwright, and cashed in. But he did not because he could not.

> I was but just firmly established as a popular playwright when I began to be obsessed by the teeming memories of my past life. . . . It all came back to me so pressingly, in my sleep, on my walks, when I was rehearsing plays, when I was at a party, it became such a burden to me that I made up my mind I could only regain my peace by writing it all down in the form of a novel. I knew it would be a long one and I wanted to be undisturbed, so I refused the contracts managers were anxious to give me and temporarily retired from the stage.

It would be hard to put the matter more clearly and simply—or with greater effectiveness. That is what you have to do for the best work—you have to do it because you can do no otherwise—and to do it demands integrity as well as skill.

I remember very well the first shock of reading "Of Human Bondage"—the realization that here was somebody telling the truth. You might not like it but you could not deny it—here was the truth as one man had found it to be. And it is this intellectual honesty—often dispassionate but always civilized—that runs like a vein of iron through all of Maugham's best work. He has never taken human beings for granted—they are there to be observed, not judged or belabored. He can, it is true, employ malice upon a character as easily as a cat uses its claws—but the best of his work still strikes me as singularly unmalicious. The worst is as ephemeral as a good Martini, and as well-mixed. Even in such an essentially empty book as "Theatre," the pieces fall into place with a satisfying click, the expected surprises come off. The incision is so neat that one ceases to wonder, looking on, whether the operation was really necessary. A great craftsman—a great operator—and something more.

For it would be worth anybody's while—especially the hypothetical young writer's—to look at certain things. To notice, for instance, the ease of the transition between past and present and back again in "Cakes and Ale"—to meditate over the self-revelation in such a line as Lady Kitty's in "The Circle"—"Notwithstanding all my temptations I've been absolutely faithful to Hughie in spirit"—with the chill it brings to the enthusiasms of the heart. Or, for that matter, to notice the form of the short stories—the casual beginning that is not quite so casual as it seems. Mr. Maugham writes stories that have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and you can see the point of departure, but not at first. I admit that much of the work has a bitter taste, but it is never brackish. And I doubt if a writer should be penalized for his skill. It is part of his business to be skillful, though his way may not be your way.

As regards women, Mr. Maugham has created at least three living ones. Thackeray did not do more and Bennett created two. It seems odd to think of him as "the dean of living English novelists"—the title, with its implications, belongs to a different sort of man. But what are you to do? If he had not written "Of Human Bondage," a handful of the short stories, and some of the other work—you may choose as you will—it would be very easy to dismiss him as a clever and adept French writer in English—something between the early W. L. George and a superior and sharper Pinero. I mean, if you were a youthful critic and used to dismissing elder writers. But, unfortunately, the work is there, and there to be judged. I do not know what the final judgment will be and I doubt if Mr. Maugham would be entirely interested. But perhaps this much may be said. It includes one masterpiece, in its scale and for its time. It includes no work, since the very early work, that is not the work of a professional. It includes an autobiography of extreme intellectual honesty, by a man who wished to make a certain thing of his life and has worked it out to that pattern. It is honest, in the field of its lens. And for consistent clarity and consistent ease, it is hard to match in contemporary writing.

I should like, if I had room, to comment upon certain other remarks of Mr. Maugham's in "The Summing Up"—his remarks about style, for instance, his remarks about success. But I cannot, and you had better read the book instead. You will not find the complete portrait of a man, in the Rousseau style. But you will find the portrait of a mind and the portrait of a writer. And, if you want to know how certain things are achieved in writing—well, here is how one man did them, if you can read and remember.

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Scandal in Oklarada

WHAT PEOPLE SAID. By W. L. White. New York: The Viking Press. 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

FORTUNATELY, I think, we have ceased to talk of The Great American Novel. At its best that was pretentious talk of a pretentious possibility. It presumed a godlike seeing of a clearly discernible land. And as far from that pretension as from that possibility Mr. White has written his profoundly sad story of an earth as crowded with fault as with bewilderment. But in a native language, which is at the same time true and inarticulate, he has written the baffled, stumbling story of an American generation, which followed fathers too optimistic or fathers too careless, to a tragedy which involved fathers and sons together in the puzzled ineffectuality of our times.

Despite Mr. White's protest that his book is only fiction, there will undoubtedly be many who will see here the story of Emporia, Kansas, of William Allen White and his son. Such seeing is unimportant and irrelevant. William Aldington Carrough in print is excellent American as William Allen White is in life. That the excellence of such men and their faith in the possibility of a world rearranged to heart's desire by the progressive wing of the Party was inadequate defense against the folly of others is no family story. The Carroughs in Athena were not the only stunned spectators of such a fate as inevitably caught their friends, the Norssexes, clever men who overreached their cleverness in their refusal to be bound by scruple. It was an American spectacle. And sadder than the fate of the Norssexes, which proceeded from the father's check kiting to the son's bond stealing to a scandal which stirred the State of Oklarada into indignation and ferocity, is the hurt bewilderment which it made not only in Junior Carrough but in his generation.

Certainly at this book's end, Junior Carrough on his way back to *The Sun* after seeing Isaac Norssex sprawled in suicide seems more a man of tragedy than Lee Norssex in the penitentiary or Mrs. Norssex, who protected her husband's privacy while he killed himself, or any of the others Mr. Norssex left behind. Junior, caught emotionally in the fortunes of his friends and intellectually in the complexities of his world, remains at the last the bewildered central figure of this book and of his generation. It is possible that Mr. White did not mean it so. Perhaps he set out to make his drama that of those Norssexes, who despite real virtues in kindness and in character, went half-hurrying, half-driven to the end of their folly. But to me nothing in this novel was so impressive as the lostness of Junior Carrough. He was involved in no scandal, caught in no personal tragedy, desperately driven by no fear. He seems nevertheless the disturbing figure of the American; and the thing which may destroy him and his satisfaction in his living is neither fear nor greed but a sense of ineffectual uncertainty in a roaring world.

Mr. White has written his slowly cumulative story with a lively command of the colloquial American language and with seeing memory of fatuous business men, of lobbyists and politicians, of a trapped small town tough, of small town sons and small town fathers, of angry farmers, of hungry unemployed, and of all the physical details of the appearance and the living of the American community: its streets come to life in Athena and to such a sun-baked sleep-walking as seemed to be outside the window of Lee Norssex's little bank in Elm Valley. Oddly Mr. White's community seems more whole and living than his individuals. The reason may lie in his swift switching from personality to personality in a story crowded with people. But the sum of them is undoubtedly the American scene. And the lack of wholeness in the individual characters may paradoxically serve the soundness of his full picture: we are caught in seeing without understanding; we are lost in knowing without faith; we are no longer sure that life can be satisfactorily rearranged even by the progressive wing of the Party. Like Junior Carrough, we can see and be kind, but that may by no means be enough.

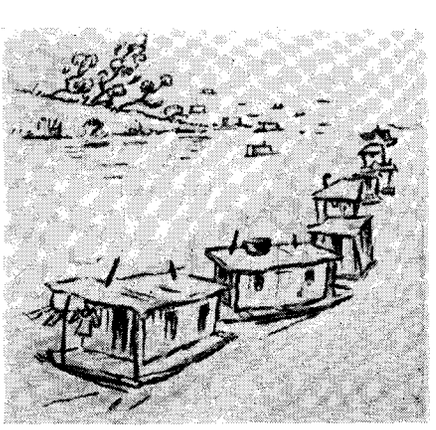
Shanty-Boat People

BLOW FOR A LANDING. By Ben Lucien Burman. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1938. $2.50.

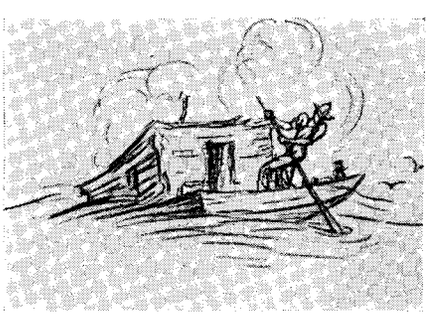
Reviewed by CLARK B. FIRESTONE

OF a recent river book, the author of another, himself a steamboat captain, said that it had "one foot on shore all the time." His criticism may be passed along to this third river book, but only as a commendation. Such books may be roughly divided into two classes: those written from the standpoint of the pilot house—Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi" is the classic illustration—and those written with a foot, or at least an eye, on the shore. Ben Burman's intimate pictures of life along the lower Mississippi's shores make "Blow for a Landing" well worth attention.

As a novel it has obvious faults. It is filled with adjectives; its numerous adverbs are somewhat unruly; its similes are a bit overdone. There is too much detail and too much repetition. The big flood with which the story ends (that of 1927, or perhaps 1937) should have been a climax, but is not, for plenty of high water has preceded it. Major floods have a way of warping books as well as boards.



DRAWINGS BY ALICE CADDY
From "Blow for a Landing."



Yet in the ultimate test of a novelist, ability to create character, Mr. Burman comes through triumphantly. His shanty-boat hero, Willow Joe, is reasonably sure of a place among rememberable portraits of real Americans. This slim, blue-eyed, kindly youth—dumb, credulous, and yet with notable stuff in him—finds "a power of music" in everything—plates, knives, combs, jugs, cigar-box guitars—and his great dream is to play the calliope on a showboat. Perched on his shoulder, a pet raccoon goes along through singular vicissitudes afloat and ashore, the chain gang among them. And as with him, Mr. Burman has succeeded with the figures of Joe's parents in creating personalities that are alive, sympathetic, and credible.

Never, perhaps, have the life and background of the lower Mississippi been presented with so much authority and charm. Through these pages move humble folk of the shantyboats, strange evangelists, card sharpers, a fat governor, Spanish-moss gatherers, muskrat traders, fishers of buffalo and catfish, Negroes with strange beliefs. Over the scene fly the snowy cranes, and through it rolls the turbid Mississippi. Alice Caddy's outline drawings, printed as chapter heads, are in keeping.

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Urban Jungles

THE CULTURE OF CITIES. By Lewis Mumford. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1938. $5.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

IN this book Mr. Mumford continues, and frequently repeats, his "Technics and Civilization" of 1934. In the earlier volume he surveyed man's long experience of tools and machines, and added his eloquent voice to the chorus of our modern Isaiahs. That chorus has been singing, with a unanimity that sounds as if some mysterious force were regimenting even the prophets, some such refrain as this: men must conquer machines, or machines will conquer men; Cultural Lag will get you if you don't watch out. Mr. Mumford at once takes up the refrain in this new book, which he tells us "seeks to explore what the modern world may hold for mankind once men of good will have learned to subdue the barbarous mechanisms and the mechanized barbarisms that now threaten the very existence of civilization."

About half of "The Culture of Cities" is devoted to a historical survey of cities in our Western civilization from the Middle Ages to the present. Mr. Mumford has collected some very interesting details on almost all conceivable phases of urban life, from sewage and fortification to the love-lives of the citizens. He has tied them together by some ingenious, and occasionally sensible, theories, and by some very strong emotional preferences. He feels that the medieval city must have been a pleasant place, because the profit motive was there properly subordinated to custom and decency. Cities got ugly, over-crowded, smelly, and unsanitary only with the rise of artillery, Protestant capitalism, Renaissance princely despotism, and utilitarian economics. The "insensate industrial town" was produced by the introduction of the paleotechnic machine into this already sub-human mixture. Centralization, both political and economic, finally achieved in the twentieth century the modern megalopolis, where the good life is just a little more impossible than it has ever been.

Having thus revealed to us our plight, Mr. Mumford spends his last three chapters on what used to be called, before the phrase itself at any rate got a little worn, The Way Out. This he finds in regionalism—planned regionalism, of course. Social scientists will find in biology the magic that mechanistic sciences like physics failed to provide them with. Our present neotechnic (a few capitalistic and fascistic devils having been exorcised) will give way to biotechnic, the overgrown city will be gradually dispersed into a countryside covered with electric power lines, happy little factories, towns without motor roads, and motor roads without towns. What is left of megalopolis will be simply metropolis, on the whole a good thing, since art, science, and culture cannot, it seems, be dispersed around the countryside quite as effectively as electricity.

Like all Mr. Mumford's books, this one abounds in materials inviting to discussion. Those who liked "Technics and Civilization" are almost sure to like "The Culture of Cities." Readers who are here making their first acquaintance with Mr. Mumford are advised to turn at once to page 495, where the indispensable terms eotechnic, paleotechnic, neotechnic, and biotechnic are defined. Mr. Mumford loves sweeping statements such as "the freedom demanded by the utilitarians was in reality freedom for unrestricted profits and unlimited aggrandizement," but such statements are at least challenging. On almost every page he issues an invitation to argument. We had better refuse the invitation, and confine ourselves to two very general observations.

In Mr. Mumford, as in so many of those admirable and forward-looking people usually known in this country as "liberals," one may note a paradoxical behavior, perhaps not inadequately described in a metaphor: trying to quiet a bull by waving a red flag in front of it. They want men to stop fighting, to work happily, to live in prosperity, to close the sad gap between their ethical codes and their actual practices. This they apparently hope to achieve by prodding them into outraged indignation, by upsetting their consoling little routines, by making fun of them. Mr. Mumford had not to convert his fellow artists and intellectuals; they were all for planning anyway. He had to convert rugged individualists and economic royalists, or at any rate the milder followers of the men who made megalopolis. Needless to say, his methods of conversion are psychologically very unskilled. He is almost as heavy-handed a propagandist as the German racialists, for whom he has such a sound contempt. This liberal habit of insulting prospective converts is the more to be regretted, since on the whole the liberals really do want what "men of good will" have always wanted.

Logically no doubt in close relation with this perverse notion of how to influence people is another phase of American liberalism also well exhibited in Mr. Mumford's book. There is for the liberal, as for the rest of us, much very wrong on this earth, much ugliness, cruelty, suffering, and other evil. He cannot explain this by any Christian answer to the problem of evil, nor can he, as an egalitarian and a lover of his fellowmen, explain it by anything deeply rooted in ordinary human beings. His solution is to find a series of personal devils, the designing, wicked few who have so long ruled this earth—kings, nobles, priests, financiers, industrialists, and dictators.

Mr. Mumford is too subtle a person to blame the "insensate industrial town" entirely on the capitalists, and he seems to suspect that the gas stations, hot-dog stands, dance-halls, and the rest of the slums that line our American motor highways are there partly because more people want them there than want them destroyed. Indeed, he can write one sentence that undermines most of his book:

> Survivals of ancient, pre-Christian religions, belief in sympathetic magic, belief in wizardry, still linger in various strata of the modern mind, immune to the germicidal action of positive science: they are, in effect, an automatic provision against a too narrow basis of continuity in the social heritage.

What if rugged individualism were an even fresher survival? But mostly the liberal tradition is too strong for Mr. Mumford, and as he looks back at history he sees a long line of villains insuring that Wrong shall be forever on the throne, that Right shall occupy its somewhat uncomfortable permanent post on the scaffold. This is, of course, a noble sentiment—one of the noblest. But Aunt Hattie did feel much the same way about her kidney trouble.

Public Works Administration

TEN EYCK HOUSES, BROOKLYN. *From "The Culture of Cities."*

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A Good Second Novel

THE DAUGHTER. By Bessie Breuer. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by LUCIA ALZAMORA

A GOOD second novel by the author of a good first one is all too rare. Bessie Breuer, who three years ago published "Memory of Love," has written one in "The Daughter." It's a fine thing to see a writer emerge as a novelist—to know that the second lot of three hundred odd pages was written because their author had something to say, and not merely because the publishers expected it.

Alan Anderson
BESSIE BREUER

"The Daughter" is a fully written, carefully thought, deeply felt novel and not at all the familiar vignette it might have been in less capable and less passionate hands. After all, a great many people have written about sensitive, maladjusted young girls, standing at the brink of life, but Miss Breuer's Katy is not one of these. For one thing, she plunges and the author sees her through; for another, her personal story is the significant hinge on which to hang that bigger theme which ends in being a story of our times. Katy and what happens to her are the products of her environments—the one in which she grows up and the one into which she is later thrust. The child of divorced parents, she is exactly what they make of her. They give her a love of the pure, the beautiful, the good, and then, at a crucial age, a futile, foolish, restless life with the foolish, tragic, restless mother whom she both loves and hates, and always apart from the beloved, idealized father. When she and her mother settle for a few weeks in a little town on the hot west coast of Florida, among friendly, careless, hard-boiled people such as she had never known, she is suddenly ripe for her headlong entry into actuality by way of an almost purely physical love affair and also, inevitably, for the reaction.

Katy's story, her mother's, her father's, her lover's, and even west-coast Florida's—all of them here, however lightly touched upon—are somehow convincingly the product of our peculiar twentieth century civilization. That is probably why Miss Breuer, quite apart from her brilliant, unabashed writing, has produced so good a book.

Coming of Age

THREE WOMEN. By Hazel Hawthorne. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by FRANCES WOODWARD

THERE have been of late a great many novels by and about women, and Civil War stories lurk in every publishing bush. These facts may prejudice a sated public against "Three Women," which would be a great pity, because it is a very good book. Not a magnificent book, nor a great American classic, but a book head and shoulders above the run. Hazel Hawthorne writes a sensitive, somewhat muted prose. Her story is thoughtful, somber, careful, and in many places both moving and impressive. It is set on Cape Cod before and during the War between the States, but it is not in the strict sense a historical novel. The three women, Roxanna, Emily, and Mellisa, whom we meet first as little girls in 1848, whose highly diverse maturings the book traces until 1867, are necessarily affected by the war, but only as adolescents in any over-intimate community are affected by the pressure of changing events. The themes of their three lives, interweaving, hurt by the war and hurting others, are well conceived, and brought to an inevitable end.

Miss Hawthorne's dialogue is the least successful part of her writing. It is pretty literary, perhaps consciously trying for a flavor of the sixties. But her oblique, inferential explorings of the minds of her characters are imaginative and correct. Some writers have done better than she with the battlefields of the war; but many have done infinitely worse. It may be debatable that Mellisa would have become a common soldiers' prostitute, but her experiences in the cotton mills are real, and the death of her idiot father under the hard, dutiful eye of her wild-hearted mother is a good scene indeed. I doubt if "glandular protest" was yet born to phraseology, but Emily's thwarted desire for a man—for any man—flowered only too well in just such New England parsonages. Roxanna didn't find in her husband the combination of father and lover which she thought he would be. Roxannas never do.

"Three Women" is uneven, unsure in many places. But it is a serious, adult attempt to write a novel for adults. What's more the author treats the English language with reverence, and writes it well.

A. I. BEZZERIDES

Odyssey of a Truck

LONG HAUL. By A. I. Bezzerides. New York: Carrick & Evans. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

FOR his first novel A. I. Bezzerides set himself a sharply limited job of writing, and most notable, I think, among the qualities of "Long Haul" is the discipline and dispatch with which that job is done. It is the story of a man with a truck, hauling produce between Oakland and Los Angeles. There are also his brother, and some other truckers, and a girl they pick up on the road, but chiefly it is a tale of a man's life behind the wheel, burning up the road, feeling the heavy tires under him as though they were his organs, and fighting off sleep on the eighteen-hour shifts. There is hardly more to it than that, just the kinesthetic feel of working with a truck.

Its success is largely due, as already suggested, to the single-mindedness with which Bezzerides handles his material. No larger gropings have tempted him away from his theme. From start to finish Nick is tearing along the road, picking up a load, selling it, driving back, nodding, clawing for the brakes, battling for his pay, chiseling gas for his truck, riding. It is a small Odyssey, to which the other and definitely minor episodes are attached, decorating but never obliterating the central adventure. Many names might be mentioned, of men whose styles have probably inspired, certainly influenced, Bezzerides's brusque and muscular writing. But there is enough evidence of solid individuality to balance these unavoidable traces. Dialogue and narrative are easily handled, caught on the wing, and there is a strong emotional surge just under the controlled level of the tale which he certainly borrowed from nobody. It suggests a source of power not called into play because this story did not need it, a rare and satisfying symptom in a first novel.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Charged Books

IF Mr. and Mrs. Average Reader could be whisked off to some new-plan psychiatric clinic, and given a mind-pump treatment, the sediment remaining from their reading would analyze surprisingly high in imaginative emotional ideas.

Books have in the last few years been highly charged with ideas. With facts, too, but few readers, not students, remember with any accuracy the facts they get from books. It is just as well, for if they did, they would merely muddle their own thinking, like the tiresome man in the club car who tells you the facts he happens to know about the Relief problem, and then draws sweeping conclusions. But ideas with emotion behind them and imagination driving them forward, wing into the mind and stay there. No reader of "Gone with the Wind" forgets the relation between the breakdown of a culture and moral anarchy. No reader of Thurman Arnold's "The Folklore of Capitalism" fails to carry away a new idea of the importance of institutions. No reader of Harry Scherman's "The Promises Men Live By" can ever think of "credit" again without wondering at the durability of man's faith in man.

These emotional ideas are what remain when the pleasure or excitement or satisfied curiosity of reading is past, and it is right to take them seriously. As Mr. Hoover said the other day, propaganda has become a means of fooling all of the people all of the time. Perhaps the hardest person to fool is either a man who does little or no reading, especially of cheap newspaper bilge, or one well and thoughtfully read. The first has to do his own thinking; the second has his imagination stocked with imaginative perceptions of strong and well informed minds.

Nine-tenths of so-called thinking is done, of course, with the emotions. But no one has ever calculated how much emotion is generated by imaginative ideas taken from books. The easiest way to argue the proposition is negatively. The New Deal, for example, in its less controversial aspects, has been well served by a long series of novels and plays—any one can supply titles—which have dramatized the effects of our reckless misuse of our natural resources. Erosion, slums, the slaughter of forests, unemployment of youth, monopoly, and exploitation can now easily be seen and felt as stories. But many an American conflict has not yet been dramatized. The bitter contest of accumulated wealth to maintain itself in a changing economy has had only old-fashioned books about it so far. Nor has the deterioration of the children of the too wealthy been handled except in crude or sentimental or short-sighted books. We know the poor little rich girl, and we know the tender-hearted magnate, and we know the divorcing generation; but there is no imaginative portrait yet of the ironical disintegration of a family which every journalist and every schoolmaster can tell about.

Whether these books that leave the seeds of emotion in the mind are true or false, is a question which deserves a good deal more critical discussion than it usually gets in reviewing. But whatever the verdict, there is no doubt about the effect of reading them. What the publishers call a light novel, or the producers a good Broadway play, can reach its millions and leave not a scratch behind on the thought processes. But a wide circulation of these books charged with ideas is a measure of change. Not much change; just a slight thickening of prejudice, or a slight opening of the sympathies, or a tiny will to believe. Only this; but that is how change begins. Chapter I in the social and intellectual history of the times is a history of its charged books. "Mein Kampf" is muddy and crude, but so was the Koran. It would be easy to write an essay on the effect of "Babbitt" upon American self-dramatization. If labor and the proletariat haven't found their symbols yet, it is only because so little imagination has gone into writing about them.

The new thing about all this is the way the books are being read. The highly charged books, especially those in which the pictorial imagination plays a large part—and this means the most extensively circulated—are read mostly by women. Women are the carriers of emotionalized ideas, at least in America. American males, when they are not reading light formula stories to pass the time, specialize in what they think are facts. They do not read books much, but they do eat up in vast quantities magazine articles which purport to be factual statements about every kind of situation, with the author's favorite conclusions deduced therefrom. The result is that the American male's mind is likely to move in a circle of his own prejudices which he has been feeding with such facts as he can remember. He lifts very slowly, if at all, to a philosophical view, for he has no warmth toward ideas, not being accustomed to living with them. This makes him hard to fool, but still harder to educate. It is only in science that the American college has succeeded in stimulating the male imagination.

Women are as easy to fool with imaginative ideas emotionally presented, as they are difficult to fool in personal relations. This is their weakness in reading, but it is not a weakness due to their reading, which is richer than the men's. And their other weakness is, that, like the male intellectual, when they warm to an idea they are content with that as an experience. But there can be little doubt that if one took a thousand educated American women and a thousand educated American men, there would be at least a ten per cent edge in favor of the women, when it came to an attempt to formulate any warm and appealing idea of a good life for America. Maybe the idea wouldn't work, but then such ideas never work—they only keep life working, which is what the average man's imagination would forget to do. And if this is true it is because women, with all the dangers present whenever the imagination is let loose, read more and better charged books than do the men.

Is this the fault of authors? One wonders. For an overmastering proportion of all such books, except in fiction, are written by men, and surely a majority of them even in fiction. Has the male imagination turned to the women to find a receptive and a fertile soil? Has the age-long attempt of literature to expand the human imagination, turned hopefully to the feminine half of humanity, which until the nineteenth century and except for bluestockings was supposed to need no books? Is that what foreigners mean when they say America is a woman's country—a country where the minds creative of ideas are spending their energy in appealing to the imaginations of women, male society being undetachable from the present and its facts? Mr. Lin Yutang might have an answer. Or a writer. Or a woman.

H. S. C.

Arthur William Ryder

When three weeks ago Arthur William Ryder fell dead in his class-room at the University of California, this country lost the greatest translator it has ever produced and one of its most magnificent personalities. There is not space to dwell on his beautiful versions of "Kalidasa," of "The Panchatantra," of "The Ten Princes." He made the Sanskrit masterpieces part of English literature. His original poetry was likewise of the greatest distinction, but there is far too little of it. His wit in conversation was nothing short of Voltairean. A man who could describe a great department of the University as consisting of "a sham giant surrounded by real pygmies" could touch rapiers with any one. And beyond that thirty college classes will grieve for the passing of such a teacher as youth unfortunately only encounters once.

L. B.

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Letters to the Editor: *Impressions of Aldous Huxley; Two Books for Extraverts*

Mr. Parmenter's Interview

SIR:—Congratulations to Ross Parmenter for his penetrating interview with Aldous Huxley. Mr. Parmenter nicely expresses the impression which I had upon hearing Mr. Huxley speak recently in Los Angeles before the Forum. When he discussed peace measures for a large group, he did seem a troubled spirit, "feeling that he must do something." But on another occasion after he had addressed a small gathering upon the work of D. H. Lawrence, I was pleased to observe, even from a respectful distance, the absence of "intellectual arrogance" and the gentle, soft-spoken thoughtfulness Mr. Parmenter mentioned.

Unwilling to burden Mr. Huxley with the unimportant fact that I had recently completed a Master's thesis study of his work, I was none the less pleased to be able to verify my conviction that the Aldous Huxley who has successfully aimed at the "maximum translucency" and at "incisive clarity" in his work would not be "self-consciously brilliant" in his personal manner. It is agreeable to see in him none of the sophomoric poses which his most misunderstanding followers have assumed.

Thanks to you for publishing the interview.

MARGARET M. CALHOUN.

Glendale, Cal.

Remarks

SIR:—More power for the new get-up as for the new make-up of the *Satrevlit* for April 2.

"This Year's Theater," "Critics Vote," "Reader's Almanac"—good. All three could be monthlies.

Sour note on "This Year's Theater"; It is not correct to make the theme of "Father Malachy's Miracle": "what can you do with a miracle once it is performed." The theme is to be found in the parable of Lazarus and Dives.

Anent your correspondent's shuffling for A New Deal in Spelling: was it not your own Queer Cuss who some time back quoted a certain wit as indicating that one pronunciation of "ghoti" is "fish"? It would be, as your correspondent says, "ate ceque aadh ennphynightan."

POWLYS MACSWINEY.

Cincinnati, Ohio

"Frenzied Enthusiasm"

SIR:—How about a little "frenzied enthusiasm" now from those readers who decry and would like to haul down the Faulkner-Hemingway-Steinbeck banner? Here are a couple of books by two distinguished authors who are to be complimented for their fine work in extraversion, Messrs. Smart and Peattie. I am a Faulkner fan myself and like my Sartoris cum Sutpen cum Jukes, but I am grateful to both these authors for their enthusiastic and objective study of their surroundings. I hope the fashion will be as contagious as morbid fever has been, for the reading public has been patiently accepting the introverts for a long time.

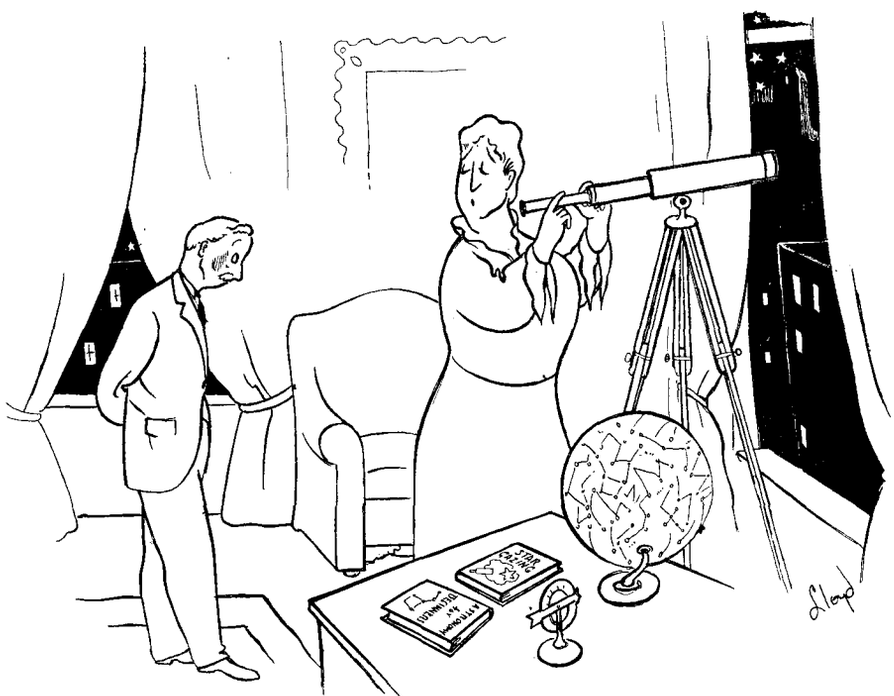
The two books, "A Prairie Grove" and "R. F. D.," are scarcely to be compared except in similarity of subject matter. Their appeal is poles apart. One is for those who love to muse in quiet admiration of a stained glass window. The other is for those who take beauty watching the sunset from the kitchen door, communing with the old pipe.

"R. F. D." and "A Prairie Grove" are very different in style. One is written in the first person and is a personal history. "A Prairie Grove" is narrative, but the narrator enters the tale now and then. This is unusual, and, when practised by a less skillful artist, it is disturbing. I should like to hear from some who are more familiar with this practice than I am. It is a note of informality and indicates the ease with which the writer deals with a dear and familiar subject. I am confused by it apart from that.

Now let's all go down to Mr. Smart's and make mud pies.

MARY COCHRAN.

Springfield, Ohio



"DO YOUR BOOKS ON ASTRONOMY SAY ANYTHING ABOUT SATURN WEARING A PINK NIGHTGOWN?"

Down with Spelling

SIR:—J. Franklin Bradley's "A New Deal in Spelling" in your issue of April 2 leads me to suggest Eric Gill's remedy, his escape from the tyranny of English spelling. Why have lettering at all, says he, in the last chapter of his expert little book, "An Essay on Typography." Lettering, and spelling as a result, never were very sensible. Let us begin and teach *all* children "phonography"—a kind of universal shorthand. All sounds could then infallibly be represented just as they are made. In two school generations, says he, we would have effected a universal spelling evolution.

WILLARD H. BONNER.

Buffalo, N. Y.

Pequot War

SIR:—At the present time I am writing a novel against the background of the settlement of the Connecticut Valley and the war with the Pequots, and I would be grateful for any information which your readers can give me concerning characters of this period.

I am particularly anxious to obtain biographical data on John Underhill, Lion Gardiner, Major John Mason, John Gallop, and Chaplain Samuel Stone, and I would also appreciate suggestions concerning little known sources of this period in colonial history.

EARL SCHENCK MIERS.

Rutgers University
New Brunswick, N. J.

Kentucky Miners

SIR:—I am anxious to secure more factual information about the lives of the coal miner in the Kentucky coal fields during the period 1910-25. Material should be true and of the personal rather than the industrial angle. In this same manner I would appreciate any unusual aspect of the Herrin Massacre and the Glen Young period in the Southern Illinois coal region.

All material of value to the donor should be marked to insure its safe return although for my purpose a transcription will serve as well.

W. O. DAUGHTON.

907 S. Sixth Street,
Springfield, Ill.

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The Shropshire Lad

MY BROTHER, A. E. HOUSMAN. By Laurence Housman. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

SOME of the comment upon his great brother in this book has already been incorporated in Laurence Housman's reminiscences, "The Unexpected Years." We have also had A. S. F. Gow's sketch of the poet, with a list of A. E. Housman's writings in Greek, Latin, and English and indexes to his classical papers. Mr. Gow was a co-Fellow of the poet at Trinity College, Cambridge, and his sketch of him is from the scholar's point of view. Indeed, the author of "A Shropshire Lad," who was also a superb critic of Latin texts, seems largely to have subordinated the literary man to the scholar—I say *seems*, because it is doubtful whether, with more time for creative writing than was allowed him by his work as a scholar, he would have produced more poetry. One cannot but believe that his life, after a strange initial failure at Oxford, and a dull Patent Office interlude, became, for a man of his temperament and inclination, a most congenial one at Cambridge.

Housman's private ambition to excel—ambition in the best sense—was towering. He was cast down by the measure of the height to which he aspired. And the result of this is that his life, as we survey it from a distance, seems cabined, cribbed, and confined, while, on the other hand, both in scholarship and in poetry he left behind him work perfect beyond dispute.

His brother's present endeavor is to disperse some of the unnecessary mystery that haunts his name. He was an unusually reticent man. An early friendship, with Moses Jackson, probably meant more to him than any other human relationship, and he suffered deeply from the later absence of his friend, who died in Vancouver in 1923. The thirty-first poem in "More Poems" and the seventh of the eighteen serious poems appended to the present book, seem, among a few others, to refer to this friendship. At the end of this book, too, there is a natal horoscope which bears upon certain aspects of Housman's character. One thing the book makes clear: that from childhood Housman possessed a decided sense of humor—which grew into an intensely dry wit—as well as deep affections well concealed. His penchant for nonsense verse resulted in some prize family specimens here collected as well as his appreciation of Hugh Kingsmill's excellent parody of the manner of "A Shropshire Lad." His notebooks contained jottings of the kind of caustic comment with which he loved to confound bad and careless scholars, as well as different drafts of most of his poems. The selection here made from his letters reveals both his delight in teasing his brother, Laurence, and his genuine assistance to him in the role of impartial and redoubtably honest critic.

I wish that many modern poets would paste in their hats the following from one of his letters to his brother:

> What makes many of your poems more obscure than they need be is that you do not put yourself in the reader's place and consider how, and at what stage, that man of sorrows is to find out what it is all about. You are behind the scenes and know all the data; but he knows only what you tell him.

When, in "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom," T. E. Lawrence wrote of himself, "There was a craving to be famous; and a horror of being known to like being known. Contempt for my passion for distinction made me refuse every offered honor. . . .", A. E. Housman wrote in the margin, "This is me."

Of the great poet's private nonsense I like best the verses that he said directed attention to one of the ocean's "most striking characteristics." "They call it salt and blue and deep and dark and so on; but they never make such profoundly true reflections as the following." He then begins:

> O billows bounding far,
> How wet, how wet ye are!

and incontrovertibly states:

> No object I have met
> Is more profoundly wet.

The demonstration, in comment on the notebooks, of how assiduous often was his search for the right word in his poems, and of the improvements in later drafts upon earlier drafts, the student of poetry will find of great interest.

This book is in other respects merely what Mr. Laurence Housman calls it: personal recollections which lay no claim to being thorough biography. A few pieces not included in "More Poems" are given in this memoir as well as a detailed analysis of the contents of the four notebooks which the brother is under orders to destroy, "my desire being to preserve, as far as is permissible, material which will be of service to students, bearing mainly upon the dates and sequence of composition of all the now-published poems."

It is a valuable book, and enjoyable chiefly because it preserves some of A. E. Housman's exquisitely dry comment.

HOME OF A. E. HOUSMAN

Expanding Germany

THE GERMAN OCTOPUS. By Henry C. Wolfe. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1938. $2.50.

WATCH CZECHOSLOVAKIA! By Richard Freund. New York: Oxford University Press. 1938. $1.50.

TRAINING IN DEMOCRACY. THE NEW SCHOOLS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. By Francis H. Stuerm. New York: Inor Publishing Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

NOW that proud and independent Austria has disappeared—leaving only a collection of dates and boundaries to plague future generations of school children—Herr Hitler looks eastward in contemplation of new changes in Europe's post-war boundaries. Directed by an incredibly clever diplomacy, the German thrust along the Danube is creating an empire which would have been beyond the dreams of Frederick the Great or Bismarck. "The German Octopus" deals in great detail with the Nazified *Drang nach Osten* which has so suddenly altered the European balance of power. Having traveled extensively throughout Central Europe and talked with both statesmen and humbler folk, Mr. Wolfe has acquired a broad view of this whole troubled area. By interlarding his examination of diplomatic maneuvers with personal anecdote, he has provided the American public with a readable account of German expansion, present and future. As the book apparently went to press in mid-February, its prediction that the German octopus would probably not strike until 1939 or 1940 was unhappily

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HENRY C. WOLFE WITH
MARIE OF ROUMANIA

optimistic. For those who remain unconvinced that Germany still seeks a large place in the sun, "The German Octopus" is highly recommended.

Inasmuch as Czechoslovakia seems honored with a high place on the Nazi agenda, Mr. Freund's little volume is extremely timely. In analyzing the historical background, geographic position, economic resources, and political structure of this precariously situated country, he likewise examines German expansion to the east. "Watch Czechoslovakia!" is a model of condensation, for it sums up a difficult political problem in little over one hundred pages of accurate and succinct analysis. Mr. Freund is eminently fair in assessing the blame for the internal dissensions which may eventually destroy Czechoslovakia, showing that both the Czech government and Sudeten Germans have many just grievances. Now that Austria has become the southern arm of the German pincers around Bohemia, the military position of Czechoslovakia has been dangerously weakened. Because of the terrain, the industrial strength of the country, and the mobility of the Czech army, Mr. Freund believes that a German attack can be resisted without serious loss for three or four weeks—enough to provoke a French, Russian, or even British rescue party. We are correctly urged by Mr. Freund to watch Czechoslovakia, for it is there that the future of Europe lies.

From perusal of "Training in Democracy," one discovers that one of the most deplorable results of a Nazification of Czechoslovakia would be the destruction of a remarkably successful school system. Although designed for the professional educator, this book is of considerable interest to the ordinary student of current affairs. A thorough study of Czechoslovakian educational methods, it stresses the emphasis upon democracy which underlies the educational system.

Neutrality, Then and Now

AMERICA GOES TO WAR. By Charles C. Tansill. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1938. $5.

AND SO TO WAR. By Hubert Herring. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by RAYMOND J. SONTAG

MR. TANSILL'S book took ten years to write; Mr. Herring's book apparently took about as many days. And yet they reach the same conclusion: from 1914 to 1917, the United States was ruled by men who betrayed the interests and the wishes of the American people. Mr. Tansill takes over six hundred and fifty heavily documented pages to demonstrate the validity of this conclusion, and he stops with 1917. Mr. Herring quickly disposes of the traitors who ruled during the last war, and moves on to the culprits who now sit in the seats of power. The latter are, in his judgment, even more dangerous: "Roosevelt has gone farther toward war in six months than Wilson did in two years." Back of Woodrow Wilson, say both authors, was the sinister figure of Colonel House, the real maker of American policy. Back of Franklin Roosevelt, says Mr. Herring, is Cordell Hull, again the real maker of American policy.

> The statement of moral principles, inflexible, self-righteous; the distrust of, indeed the opposition to, neutrality; the maintenance of the American position in the Far East no matter what risks are involved; the steady education of the people as to the necessity of presenting a stern and united front to all those whose ways offend ours—this is Cordell Hull's way in international affairs. It has also become Franklin Roosevelt's.

House and Wilson, aided by the upper classes in the East, fooled the American people into believing that by saving the British Empire we were saving the world. Hull and Roosevelt, unless checked, will repeat the performance.

> The men whom we draft will be assured that they fight to save democracy for their children's children. Not until the echo of the last gun is stilled, and another victor's peace is signed will these men—the ones who do not die—discover that they have fought for the melancholy satisfaction of postponing for a season the disruption of the British Empire.

Now, Mr. Herring is frankly a partisan. He is out to demonstrate the dangerous futility of collective security and the advantages of strict neutrality in quarrels which we do not understand and cannot solve. All honor to him. May his book be read, and make converts!

Mr. Tansill claims that he has no thesis to prove; as he properly says, "crusading zeal is hardly the proper spirit for an impartial historian." He has labored prodigiously to gather every shred of available evidence. The records of the Nye Commission and of the German archives, the available private correspondence, and countless books, periodicals, and newspapers—all have contributed something to an understanding of the years from 1914 to 1917. No other scholar has shown comparable diligence; all scholars will quarry in these pages for years to come. It would be a pleasure to say that, after twenty years, a really great history of the transition from neutrality to war had been produced. And yet that statement cannot honestly be made. Less frankly than Mr. Herring, but almost as completely, Mr. Tansill is a crusader. He has his hero, Bryan. He has his devils, headed by Colonel House. To blacken his devils, he is not content to state what they did. He must impute motives. Lansing "was keen enough to realize that complete agreement with the Colonel's viewpoint was the royal road to official promotion." And again: "Lansing was too fond of office to interpose the slightest objection to the wishes of the President's confidential adviser." In the background, never really described except by words like "doctrinaire," is President Wilson, Colonel House's "pupil." Harley Notter's "Origins of the Foreign Policy of Woodrow Wilson" is listed in Mr. Tansill's bibliography, but it is hard to see how anyone could read Notter's brilliant study and still believe Wilson was a tool in Colonel House's hands.

A very large part of the problem is summed up in two sentences quoted by Mr. Tansill. One is the question raised by Oswald Garrison Villard: "Why does the United States say to England that the laws of blockade can be altered during war, and insist to Germany that the laws governing attacks on ships cannot be altered?" The other is Wilson's argument: "England's violation of neutral rights is different from Germany's violation of the rights of humanity." Humanity, there is the word to be conjured with. Mr. Herring is shrewd enough to see that American idealism is an inescapable fact. He would have us believe that America can best serve humanity by preserving democracy at home "so that stricken nations may see and take courage." To teach by example has been part of the American ideal, and of Woodrow Wilson's ideal. To fight for righteousness is another part of the American ideal, however, and here again Woodrow Wilson spoke for the nation. The craving to fight won twenty years ago, and Mr. Tansill is so horrified by the results that he cannot really admit that belligerent idealism was a fact. His blindness sadly mars what would otherwise be a really great book.

Raymond J. Sontag is professor of history at Princeton University.

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Free Lancing in Mexico

GLASS HOUSES. By Carleton Beals. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by GRACE FLANDRAU

IT IS with a certain delicacy and indeed reluctance that one attempts to comment publicly upon an autobiography. It is not an imaginative expression set back from reality by redistilled emotions and the rigors of an art form that one is called upon to discuss, but the personal life and point of view of the author himself—all of which are susceptible only to a personal response. Indeed, Mr. Beals recognizes this in the title, "Glass Houses," which he has given to his vivid and interesting account of free-lancing as a journalist in Mexico, Italy, and Spain.

The record begins with his arrival in Mexico during the scandalous regime of Carranza, with Villa on the war path in the north and Zapata carrying on his crusade of blood and terror, idealism, right purpose, and unspeakable brutality—which apparently armed revolution always sums up to—throughout the rich provinces of Guerrero, Morelos, and Vera Cruz. Mr. Beals gives us an unforgettable picture of certain revolutionary leaders in the capital—of the greed, debauchery, drunkenness, the waste of public moneys, the treachery, and betrayals. It was a record which was to continue through many bloody years, with practically every successive leader betrayed by fellow revolutionaries and assassinated in turn. No reactionary writer (and I need not say that Mr. Beals is not a reactionary; what his actual degree of leftism is I should not presume to say) could possibly present more accurately the ugliness, horror, suffering, and bad faith that go along with this method of achieving the high purposes of social reform.

Wachs
CARLETON BEALS

With the downfall of Carranza Mr. Beals goes to Europe and writes absorbingly of experiences in Spain and in Italy during the coming of age of Mussolini Fascism. He returns to Mexico and the major part of what follows—though not quite all—deals with personages and affairs in Mexico from about 1923, I take it, to 1930 or '31.

Mr. Beals's political bias is one which all right-minded persons must share. He believes in the independence of Latin American countries, in their freedom from unfair exploitation, and the fulfillment of the best of the revolutionary ideals. But his approach, it seems to me, lacks a certain breadth and profundity. He shows us that revolutionaries, like anyone else, can be corrupt, debauched, and exploiters of the people, and that politicians and, as he himself declares, especially Latin American politicians, can be and usually are shamelessly dishonest. He presents emissaries of the Soviet Workers Republic entertaining with the utmost lavishness, drinking unlimited quantities of champagne served by liveried lackeys, eager to associate with the rich and fashionable, marrying, one of them, "a flashy blonde with much sex appeal who loved fine clothes and swank." (Good old human nature.) He observes with his mind that weakness and also villainy can be and are found in any group of human beings whatever their race or political creed. But emotionally he is able to believe in only one villain — the American investor, diplomat, capitalist, or government official. Whatever he may have seen with his own eyes, in his heart of hearts the Latin American is always right, the American capitalist or corporation always wrong. The typical American leftist, intellectual rubber stamp. One longs for a deeper and less personal philosophy, a more profound and tragic sense of human problems in all their infinite complexity.

Then too, Mr. Beals's judgments are those of the man who looks on from the sidelines and doesn't have to act. His heroes are very apt to fall from grace when they are no longer talking eloquently about what should be done, but faced with the complex and difficult job of doing it. Witness his criticism of Morrow, his disappointment with Azaña.

Azaña. Men talking in cafés about the ideal state, and then a man, confronted with the impossible task of reconciling the ideas, passions, greeds, prejudices of a dozen different factions—republicans, anarchists, syndicalists, communists, as well as the left-over conservative groups. Azaña, faced with the intricate, complex, realistic job of *doing*. So many worlds removed from talking good government in a café. I didn't like the bystander, the mere commentator, criticizing Azaña.

There are other issues I should like to take up with Mr. Beals. Among them his emphasis on the undoubted picturesqueness, color, and charm of the Mexican peasants unspoiled by "civilization." But he makes no mention of the other side of that picture—the terrible infant mortality, the sufferings of childbirth, the lingering anguish of disease unalleviated by proper medical care; the ignorance, dirt, sodden drunkenness one finds in the hinterland. I know and love these people as he does; I have lived among them, but to describe the colorfulness of their lives, the beauty of their crafts, the earthy poetry of their ritual and leave out the other side, smacks of sentimentality, and is as incomplete as it would be to describe the great scientific and industrial advantages of our own civilization and leave out the cheapness, the crime, the tabloid vulgarity.

This is merely my personal response to personal opinions expressed in this excellent autobiography. The book itself remains a brilliant record of experiences of historic importance and one you will not want to miss.

Mrs. Flandrau is a novelist and travel writer who has spent much time in Mexico. She is the author of "Then I Saw the Congo," "Indeed This Flesh," and "Under the Sun."

The Ingredients of Personality

PERSONALITY IN FORMATION AND ACTION. By William Healy, M.D. New York: W. W. Norton and Co. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by BERTRAM D. LEWIN, M.D.

DR. HEALY, Director of the Judge Baker Guidance Center in Boston, has spent thirty years in psychiatry, chiefly in child guidance, and has felt the impress of many philosophies and theories. In this book, which presents the substance of the 1937 Salmon Memorial Lectures, he conscientiously records many that have affected his work and his thinking. He gives the opinions of philosophers on the mind-body problem, he presents theories of constitution, endocrine influence, body type, and he records the psychological teachings that have been of service to him. Among the latter he especially shows the great extent to which he has been served by psychoanalysis.

But all theories, one sees, are only interesting to him when they prove themselves in practice; and Dr. Healy is at his easiest and best when he tells what happened to a certain boy or girl. His humanitarian feeling is obviously his strongest guide. Thus pointed and illustrated by his experience, what Dr. Healy has to say of the effect of the physical and the social environment, of the part played by the family, by schools, and by the working world, makes extraordinarily vivid and interesting reading. Concerning the influence of education both in the schools and outside, and the effect of environmental ideals upon the individual, Dr. Healy has much that is worth hearing.

In spite of the amount that has been printed in this field, Dr. Healy's book has a freshness that depends on the immediacy of his perceptions and on his ability to transmit them to his readers.

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Are Reviewers Too Polite?

BY LOUIS KRONENBERGER

TWO hundred years ago, when book reviewing was a form of warfare, an author might expect a reviewer to discuss anything about him except, perhaps, the merits of his book. The author's religion would certainly be worth a line or two. His politics would certainly be worth a paragraph. His private life would be conscientiously investigated: if it was virtuous, you would be invited to laugh at it; if it was immoral, you would be invited to shudder. If our author had a squint or a clubfoot, the reviewer contrived some tactful reference to his squint or clubfoot. If our author had ever gone to jail, or his father had ever gone to jail, or his father's first wife's second cousin had ever gone to jail, it was delicately blown into the record. I am presupposing, of course, that a hostile critic was reviewing the book. We can be pretty sure that a hostile critic was.

A hundred years ago, and book reviewers wrote out of a slightly less encyclopedic knowledge of their author. But if a Whig critic was reviewing a Tory poet, or an aristocratical bigwig was reviewing a Cockney upstart, the drubbing could still be terrific. Men like Jeffrey or Gifford gave no quarter: they aimed, drew, fired, and killed. Where today more than one critic will say of more than one writer, "I made him," in those days critics would say, no less complacently, "I finished him off." We all remember the famous first line of Jeffrey's review of Wordsworth's "The Excursion": "This will never do." We all remember the abuse, the objurgation, the mockery that were heaped upon the heads of a Keats or a Leigh Hunt.

I do not pardon these critical ruffians of the past. They had very bad manners. Worse, they often had very bad motives. But at least a reader got from them an extremely definite reaction. What they liked they said they liked. What they hated, or were obligated to hate, they said they hated. They used harsh words and hostile attitudes, and not even the cleverest scissors-and-paste man in a publisher's advertising department could contrive a favorable quote by juggling their words around. I condemn such people for frequently hitting below the belt. But I respect them for hitting hard.

We are none of us so inhuman that we lack sympathy with any writer, no matter how bad he is, for all the time he puts into writing a book and all the economic hardships he endures by being a writer. It is painful to have to tell a man that he has wasted a year, and that his new novel is rubbish. But I am not going to get mealy-mouthed and sanctimonious on that subject. I am sorry for the man, but I can't defend him, and I can defend him least of all in my periodical capacity of bookreviewer.

What is the function of a bookreviewer? That is not easily answered, I suppose; but if we persist in calling him a reviewer, and rule out calling him a reporter, I think we can find something like an answer. A bookreviewer exists to *evaluate* books. He is to read them, think about them, set them up against what he knows about life and about writing, and then come out and say in so many words how good they are. He may, of course, have many other things to say besides. If he is very young, he may want to say that Mr. Ogden Nash's poems somehow lack the emotional katharsis of Sophocles's "Oedipus Rex." If he is very old, he may want to say that Mr. William Faulkner somehow lacks the wholesome perspective of Anthony Trollope. He may, whatever his age, want to say that Mr. Hemingway's novel is not up to his last one, or up to Miss Cather's latest. He may feel that Mr. Hemingway's style is not so polished as Mr. Francis Brett Young's. He may feel that Mr. Hemingway is not so clean a writer as Mr. Booth Tarkington.

But in the end, after displaying his learning or his vocabulary or his acquaintance with esthetic theory or his bias in political thinking—in the end he is confronted with the necessity of saying just how good or bad the novel under discussion is. The best way of doing this is, I think, the simplest way. The reviewer can say: This is a great book, or This is a good book, or This is a fair book, or This is a bad book, or This is a terrible book, or This is beyond any question the most terrible book I have ever read.

How often is this method followed in practice? I have no statistics on the subject, but it is my feeling—based on reading many reviews and on writing some myself—that it is followed very little. Certainly there are critics who are wholly frank in their opinions and wholly forthright in expressing them—men and women on whom we can rely for intelligent and unequivocal criticism. And I feel sure there are many more such today than there were a generation ago. Also, of course, there are the reviewers who do say "this is a great book" so often that they debase the currency of the profession; their enthusiasms would be more contagious if they occasionally said—as they seldom or never do—"this is a terrible book." But speaking from an impression of the general run of reviewing, I am afraid that a majority of our reviewers are frequently too evasive and

Ballade of a Short Felt Want

BY FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

WASHINGTON'S life full well I know,
From the Parson Weems to the Rupert Hughes;
How he crossed the Delaware's ice and snow—
I know that painting, its buffs and blues.
Lives of the Adamses—J.'s, J. Q.'s,
Sam's, and they'll probably spill more.
Where is biography's nose for news?
Why don't they write about Millard Fillmore?

Dozens and dozens the Lives of Poe;
I've seen one of Chauncey M. Depew's;
Everyone's written of Hank Thoreau;
There's even a book about Henry Clews;
Lives of the Barrymores and the Drews;
Life of the bandmaster, Patrick Gilmore,
Come from the presses—don't ask me whose.
Why don't they write about Millard Fillmore?

The Jeffersons, Tom and the actor Joe;
George A. Custer and all the Sioux;
Now there's a Life of E. P. Roe;
And "Andrew Johnson" got swell reviews;
Benjamin Franklin without his shoes;
Teddy and Franklin—and few themes thrill more.
But—against Millard are there taboos?
Why don't they write about Millard Fillmore?

L'Envoi

Biographers looking for themes to choose
More of the same things write, and still more.
Why don't they write what I'd fain peruse?
Why don't they write about Millard Fillmore?

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polite to be useful. Behind their position may lurk some highly magnanimous motives; behind it there certainly lurks a very human and understandable one. For speaking straight out has one decided drawback. It commits the reviewer. Ten years may go by, and the man who has always passed for your best friend may say: "You certainly had the right dope when you called Annie Wigmaker's 'The Blue Velocipede' a great book." Nor need ten years go by. Consider the ladies and gentlemen who had high and final things to say about "Gone with the Wind."

Nevertheless, though I don't know how they could have managed to say them, I have some respect for the people who said those high and final things about "Gone with the Wind." It was at least a book they reacted to very strongly, and they liked it so well they weren't worried whether they ought to like it. But it is not every day that a book like "Gone with the Wind"—which might be called a really *great* bad novel—appears. So most of the time we hem and we haw.

At the back of some of this hesitance about doing our duty lies, I feel sure, a sense of fear. We are not certain what we think of a book. Parts of it puzzle us. Parts we relish. Parts we dislike. The character of the old grandpa, let us say, is very good—very vivid and sharp, we shall say in print. The old maid is fun—the amusing and droll maiden aunt, we shall say in print. The little boy is a natural kid—the little boy is a worthy successor to Huck Finn, we shall say in print. But Amabelle? Really, now, would Amabelle, who has been very carefully brought up—*would* Amabelle wait at the foot of a dark lane for Nicholas, particularly as it is teeming pitchforks? Have I waited at the foot of a dark lane while it was teeming pitchforks, we ask ourselves. Certainly not. Well, then, Amabelle, we shall say in print, is "unconvincingly portrayed"; especially, we shall say, in the scene where she waits for Nicholas at the foot of a dark lane while it is teeming pitchforks. But wait a minute. After all, we reviewers are not very adventurous; but in Amabelle's case—. That's it! The author took this subtle and witty way of showing what a spunky, gutsy, plucky, dashing, daring, brave, courageous, gallant little thing Amabelle was. So what we say in print is something like the following: "Although to unadventurous souls Amabelle may not seem convincingly portrayed, on the other hand, to redblooded ones Amabelle will seem the very essence of spunk and courage."

Perhaps it is just as well, considering how we read them, that we don't always understand the books we review. It would be a fatal commentary on the importance of the books if, at the rate of 100 or 150 pages an hour, we always did. Personally I see no reason why I shouldn't confess that something in a book has me guessing. There is nothing else that I could, in the circumstances, honestly say. But I don't think such candor should degenerate into a mannerism—I don't think, in other words, that the old pose of omniscience on a reviewer's part should turn, as here and there it shows signs of turning, into a new pose of all-too-human muddleheadedness. It's a little irresponsible to say: I don't understand Day Lewis, I don't understand Kafka, I don't understand Faulkner. Now it's one thing not to understand, let us say, Thomas Mann, who is a great writer whereas few of us are great readers. It's one thing, again, not to understand Gertrude Stein; the best that most of us can do is to understand what she is up to. On the other hand, this quick surrender to any writer who is not as simple as A, B, C can easily become a habit. We are none of us God, and we cannot be sure what a Faulkner or a Kafka always means, particularly as Kafka always writes symbolism and Faulkner often writes nonsense. But we can take away something of our own, an interpretation, a reaction. If we can't, we have no right to read, let alone review.

At any rate, timidity often makes reviewers nowadays hem and haw about books: they're afraid they may have to eat their words at sometime or other, or will make laughingstocks of themselves in no time at all. Personally I think this is a good thing, for most of us are a little too cocky anyhow. Whenever I am moved to thump the table at the splendors of my own critical language, or at the profundities of my own critical opinions, I revert to a review I wrote some ten years ago of a book called "The Grand Inquisitor" in which I compared the author, not once but several times, to Dostoievsky. But for all that I don't think timidity is the main cause of our stammering. The main cause, I think, is the hold-over aspect of an era of gentility that is passing, but has not yet passed, away. In that era, it wasn't nice to attack anybody unless he was what was called an unclean or a dangerous writer. Thus, raising one's eyes with a holy look toward Heaven, or averting them in shamed anguish from Earth, one could years ago say the damnedest things about Zola, let us say, or Dreiser. But otherwise it wasn't well bred, it wasn't sporting, to say more against a bad book than one absolutely had to. And in some circles, it still isn't. Some reviewers have even perfected a method by means of which they never express any opinions at all. This method is really very simple. They announce that if you believe the earth is flat, then Mr. Circumflex's scientific thesis proving that the earth is flat will prove very stimulating to you. Or that in line with the latest movement of writing dialogue by omitting all the vowels, Miss Cedilla has written some dialogue which omits all the vowels. Or that if you believe a novel can be written backwards-to-front, then you will be enchanted with Miss Horsefly's new novel, which is beyond any question written backwards-to-front. Or they will say that if you like the work of Pauline Hophead, you ought to be much interested by the newest novel of Adelaide Cutthroat.

This is, of course, buck-passing at its extreme worst, but it often happens. Even commoner is the practice of a reviewer employing one adjective as a euphemism for another. In fact there is a whole collection of neutral or half-way commendatory adjectives which reviewers constantly use in place of adjectives that stigmatize. A boring novel is called a leisurely or quiet one. One which doesn't make sense is called fantastic or whimsical. A glib book is called fluent. A stuffed-shirt author is referred to as a thinker, a philosopher, a student of human culture. A prig is characterized as a moralist. Slush is spoken of as optimism. The pretty-pretty is said to be delicate as a Dresden china shepherdess. Ranting is referred to as eloquence. Raving is referred to as having visions. An extremely fancy, turgid, or archaic style is spoken of as a Biblical style. Some one who imitates, let us say, Virginia Woolf is said to be strongly influenced by Virginia Woolf. A book by and about a clodhopper is *always* defined as earthy—there just is no other word. A book that runs all over the place is called picaresque. And anybody who mentions Dorothy Parker, Stravinsky, Picasso, Jean Cocteau, Brancusi, Frank Lloyd Wright, or even Alexander Woollcott is referred to as a modern sophisticate.

Now, of course, this not only does serious harm to criticism; it also does serious harm to language. When a really whimsical novel comes along how am I to guess that it isn't another composition that has been smuggled out of a padded cell? When a writer really turns up with a Biblical style, how am I to know that his work doesn't resemble a barrel of molasses? When a new Dostoievsky emerges, how am I to feel sure that he isn't my old friend "The Grand Inquisitor"?

I'm not pleading for perfect reviewers. I'm not suggesting that authors necessarily need rougher handling. I am only insisting that a literary criticism deficient in clear opinions and reactions, a literary criticism punctuated with, here, and "on the other hand," there, a "notwithstanding," somewhere else, a "granting the author his bias," comes close to defeating its own purpose. Posterity will catch up with reviewers whether they make the mistake, as a few of them do, of being too harsh or whether they make the mistake, as many more of them do, of being too mild. Posterity is not the point. The point is that criticism at its best is an art, but that even at its humblest it should constitute a service. And wherein do they also serve who only stand and wait to see which way the wind is blowing?

Louis Kronenberger, dramatic editor of Time, *has written many book reviews for leading newspapers and magazines.*

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HARCOURT, BRACE AND CO., 383 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK

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From Publishing to Politics

GEORGIAN ADVENTURE. By Douglas Jerrold. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1938. $3.50.

Reviewed by PAUL WILLERT

THE title of this book is reassuring, and it gave promise of a few hours of escape from contemporary problems. Knowing Mr. Jerrold's ability as a writer and his intolerance of stupidity, there was every reason to expect a stimulating and provocative account of the twenty-five years' reign of George the Fifth. I had forgotten Mr. Jerrold as a politician and Catholic, member of Lord Lloyd's short-lived New Party, and the man who provided a plane to bring General Franco from the Canary Islands to Morocco. Inevitably contemporary politics take a large place in his book. It is a pity, for Mr. Jerrold's political views are not original and, unless you agree with Cardinal Hayes, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Innitzer, and Neville Chamberlain, you will be filled with impotent exasperation and will be likely to forget the first half of "Georgian Adventure." Though Mr. Jerrold's political reflections and propaganda are of little value, few can write more entertainingly and more critically of people, events, literature, and institutions: few except the surviving Colonel Blimps will disagree with anything that he says about the complete inefficiency and stupidity of the military caste and politicians who are responsible for the Gallipoli and the Paschendaele offensive.

His chapters on the war are among the best of war literature, and they are without bitterness and are extremely human. Reading them, it is difficult to understand how some one so intelligent and clear-minded should have in twenty-five years changed from a Catholic liberal to a reactionary who considers Franco's war to be the Third Crusade. It is hard, remembering Mr. Jerrold's story of the two generals who decided that they had better attack "something" lest people should say that they were doing nothing, to realize that he can now write: "The Moors are benign and kindly"; "There have been no atrocities on the nationalistic side"; "The Italians did not take Bilbao," and much more of the same kind. He is too well informed not to have heard of the murders of Federico Garcia Lorca and the wife of Ramon Sender, or of Mussolini's boasting telegrams after the fall of Bilbao; and he must remember the fate of the Spanish soldiers fighting in Morocco against the Moors only a few years ago.

Mr. Jerrold, like the present British government, dislikes and fears Russia. This fear colors all his political opinions. Communism, he says, has destroyed the Liberal Party in England and with it the whole of his political background and tradition. Russia through the League of Nations pushed Mussolini into the Abyssinian War, the object being that with Italy heavily involved in Abyssinia the communists would rise in Italy and an Italian defeat "would have brought the structure of world order in Africa and Asia down in ruins." How, he does not explain.

After communism he dislikes socialism, and he attacks the English government because it practises a form of state capitalism which has in it ingredients of socialism. In a manifesto written for the "New" party, which is a somewhat nebulous document, he writes the following significant sentence: "Finally, the Conservative Party must turn its back on the present parliamentary system in favor of a system which will restore the reality of self-government in the appropriate spheres and enable a strong central government to speak for the nation, and not merely for a class, on national issues." I seem to hear echoes of the Hitler of 1930 and 1931.

All this is sad stuff and it is a relief to turn to the unpolitical part of the book, which is autobiographical and shows the taste and distinction of a Georgian brought up on memories of Leigh Hunt, Thackeray, Browning, Dickens, and Landor. For these men were the friends of his father and grandfather, and it was in this atmosphere of Liberal scholarship that Mr. Jerrold was given his early education. Mentally, he was well polished when he arrived in Oxford in 1911 and already critical of the traditions of the last century. He was not very impressed by New College, but he soon found his way to "an oasis of a University in a forest of school ties" and found it an enjoyable refuge. In it were J. B. S. Haldane, Harold Laski, Philip Guedalla, L. Hore Belisha, and Victor Gollancz, to mention but a few. At Oxford he had much brilliant conversation in and out of the Union and founded the *Oxford Quarterly* which attacked and discussed all the Victorian beliefs and institutions. Good training for a writer; and when he left Oxford he took the *Oxford Quarterly* with him and began in London a career of journalism which was interrupted by the war. Even during the war he was not entirely removed from literature, as he renewed his acquaintance with A. P. Herbert and Rupert Brooke in Gallipoli. Of Brooke he wrote "His was to me a rarefied charm like his poetry, which always reminds me of water artificially clarified and refrigerated, flowing musically over imported marble from the quarries of Pentelicon—pure, fresh, brilliant, and classical." Few have summed up Brooke so accurately, and this is a typical example of Mr. Jerrold's criticism.

Wounded in 1916 in France, Mr. Jerrold spent the rest of the war in Government office in London and was as disillusioned by the politicians at home as he had been by the professional soldiers in the war. But he remained a civil servant, acquiring his dislike probably of Parliamentary Government, till 1923 when he went into publishing. He and Victor Gollancz went to the house of Benn to build up an active trade publishing house. They achieved a sudden and revolutionary success, and the account of this success is fascinating reading to any one who is interested in the problems of selling books. Mr. Jerrold has returned to more orthodox, more reticent publishing and, as you will gather from his book, has had time to play quite a part in the politics of Spain in recent years. And this has, I think, led him into a publishing mistake, for his "Georgian Adventure" logically should end with the death of George V.

Paul Willert, manager of the New York office of the Oxford University Press, was previously a correspondent for Ullstein (Berlin).

English Country Types

PORTRAIT OF A VILLAGE. By Francis Brett Young. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

THE cuckoo flies from Africa's veldt towards the English springtime and alights, according to Mr. Brett Young's fancy, in the village of Monk's Norton in Worcestershire. Thus the author unites, in this pleasant addition to rural *belles lettres*, the continent and the island which have always inspired him in his fiction. His interpretation of England's countryside is more noticeable for detail than for depth; but the detail is sound and, moreover, in a book which—almost against its will—becomes a eulogy of rural scenes and people it is probably just as well not to go too far beneath the surface. Economics make a sad appearance along the hedgerows; and so, admitting that the cottages in his imaginary village are a "social disgrace" and that their inhabitants are sunk deep in poverty, Mr. Brett Young turns towards analyses of character and descriptions of scenery. His theme forces him to crowd into his little village more types than such a village would actually possess; but nobody could deny their likeness to fact. Of the laborers he says little —is it because their presence in such a modern eclogue would be inopportune? Of the lower-middle, middle, and upper-middle classes—the butcher, the vicar, the parvenu squire, and their like—he has things to say that are often shrewd and sometimes profound. The portrait is recognizable, and that in itself is no mean feat; those who want further information must turn to the less agreeable prose of the blue books.

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Loose Leaf Wisdom for Seekers of Truth

WORLD BRAIN. By H. G. Wells. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

THE most indefatigable of modern evangelists is still calling on us to flee from the City of Destruction while there is yet time; but the repentance he wants now is intellectual, which is unfortunately a slower and more complicated matter than emotional regeneration. And, just as unfortunately, is not likely to get us very far unless it is accompanied by an emotional regeneration among people who are never going to hear Wells's preachings. Like so many reforms recommended nowadays, it might have saved us if it had been done twenty years ago.

Wells is still looking for the Competent Receiver for a bankrupt world, but since no visible receiver seems very competent, he concludes that what we must have is a disinterested and objective organization of the considerable amount of knowledge now lying around loose in snippets. So this miscellaneous collection of lectures, broadcasts, and magazine articles is loosely tied together by reference to the idea of the World Encyclopedia which Wells advanced in one of his recent books. (In which one it is hard to recall, they come so fast nowadays.) This would be a sort of loose-leaf work, apparently, continually kept up to date, in which the earnest and inquiring citizen could find a digest of what is actually and indisputably known, at the moment, about any subject.

Several doubts as to the practicability of this plan will suggest themselves. Wells disposes fairly well of some of them, but his confidence that experts on any subject can speak, at any given moment, with a reasonably unanimous voice, rests on his faith that differences of opinion have been greatly exaggerated. "My impression is that human brains are very much of a pattern, that under the same conditions they react in the same way, and that were it not for tradition, upbringing, accidents of circumstance and particularly of accidental individual obsessions, we should find ourselves—since we all face the same universe—much more in agreement than is superficially apparent." To question this is to lay oneself open to the suspicion of seeing nothing but the superficially apparent; nevertheless, it seems likely that such agreement could be reached only after science had been purged of many who call themselves scientists.

And even if the Saving Remnant, the really disinterested truth seekers, could agree, who would do anything about it? Who wants the truth nowadays? A fair number of people in this country, perhaps; and in the four surviving democracies huddled together in Northwestern Europe, wondering how they can save their colonial empires from hungry and powerful neighbors. But even in the democracies there are minorities, perhaps more powerful in this country than in the others, which hold that truth is not truth unless it conforms to their dogmas; and in the states which seem likely to make the history of the next few decades there is no appetite at all for what Wells calls truth.

It all makes good reading, of course. And there is a melancholy satisfaction for Americans in the fact that Wells told a British audience eighteen months ago that "quite a number of people over there seem almost to know what is happening to them." After he took another look at us last fall he was not so sure.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 211)

LORD DUNSANY—"IF I WERE DICTATOR."

Distribution, for instance, must not be so good that, as in America, nobody in the vegetable-growing districts can get fresh vegetables because all the vegetables are so expeditiously sent off to the towns to be canned.

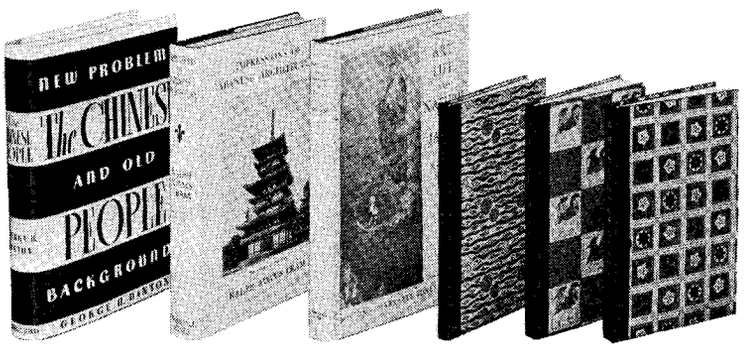
Ninety-Foot Ketch

WHO CALLED THAT LADY A SKIPPER? By Marion Rice Hart. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1938. $2.75.

THIS reader calls that lady a skipper, and an excellent one. Without benefit of any experience in navigation, without compass for a great part of the way, without captain or regular crew, Molly Hart took her ninety-foot ketch *Vanora* from England to the Dutch East Indies. It was mostly junk when she bought it, so worn in spots that she could poke holes through the sides, but she made it sail. Her letters home describe a humorous journey, full of small excitements. Her crew dodged reefs by the grace of God alone, for Eric and Demetrios always steered "with long follow-through motions." They dodged bailiffs at Singapore, and sailed on to Sumatra, Java, and Bali, where the butcher offered the lady skipper a job which she nearly accepted, since her funds were by then reduced to about four pounds. The lizards of Komodo, she found, could be outstared, and the wild men of Celebes lived in a trance.

Yes, the lady is a skipper, and a delightful diarist. If we were asked, "To what might she attribute her success?" we should say without hesitation: "To intelligence, tact, great humor, a sextant, and a talent for apt profanity."

LITERATURE OF THE FAR EAST



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Ambassador's Career

THE EDUCATION OF A DIPLOMAT. By Hugh Wilson. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by MARTHA DODD

FOR twenty-seven years Hugh Wilson, our present Ambassador to Germany, has been in the American diplomatic service. This short book is a record of his first six years as a career diplomat and closes with America's entry into the Great War.

The son of a wealthy Chicago family, Mr. Wilson has had every opportunity to make for himself a full and rich life. He was well educated, he traveled far and wide over the face of the earth, he met interesting personalities in every land, and had a chance to study at first hand the customs, habits, and historical traditions of many nations and races. A book from him therefore awakes great expectations. But "Education of a Diplomat" is a charming, light, amiable book —and that is about all. The author fulfills all the requirements he thinks a diplomat should have; he is suave, discreet, nonpartisan. He makes no attempt to get at the essence of a nation or a race; he skims the surface of life and history wherever he goes; social, cultural, and political backgrounds hold no interest for him.

Having made a decision to give up business for the diplomatic service, Mr. Wilson went to Paris to study. He found the capital "a city of spacious graciousness, a city which grew old with the air of a great lady." His associates there were "painters, musicians, architects," but curiously enough, he leaves out any mention of the extraordinary and fascinating developments of art and culture during one of the most stimulating periods in modern artistic history.

Appointed private secretary to the Minister in Portugal, he entered upon an experience that was exciting and strange. Yet that, too, he viewed with detachment. "Portugal," he says, "was remote from my interests . . . The Portuguese were giving thought to their internal problems only and it was hard for an outsider to feel a passionate interest in whether one or another group ran the nation."

From Lisbon he returned to America to take his foreign service examinations and to be appointed to the Embassy in Guatemala. Here he began his practical diplomatic training. His chief taught him, among other things, that "a knowledge of form . . . is of the highest value especially in a profession where form has become traditional . . ." He had a chance to put into practice one of the tenets of his faith, "If a choice between sincerity and manners were necessary, I should unhesitatingly choose manners for ninety-nine per cent of the people with whom I come in contact and sincerity for the one per cent who were really friends or whom I had to trust in business . . ."

He was Chargé d'Affaires for two years in Guatemala. The best and most memorable chapters in this book deal with the life and scenery of this Central American country. It offered a romantic, picturesque, and leisurely life which appealed greatly to Mr. Wilson. Once again in Washington, Mr. Wilson received orders to go to Buenos Aires, a post which pleased him none too well. Then he went to Berlin, to Switzerland, to Austria, and finally to Switzerland again, where the story ends.

Mr. Wilson's guiding principle, as it emerges from his narrative, is "We do not love, we do not hate, we do not judge, we do not condemn; we observe, we reflect, we report." "Education of a Diplomat" is a quiet, easy-flowing narrative without opinion, full of conventional good taste, form, and tact. Perhaps the most glaring inadequacy, and there are few because of the negative nature of the book, occurs in the author's treatment of the years 1915-1917. "I can remember," he says, "my bewilderment, my awe, my fear, *too*, I admit, and my puzzled ignorance of what it was all about. I remember thinking savagely of the limitations of my knowledge, of the vast forces of which I must be ignorant."

The most interesting period of his life, as Mr. Wilson says in his last paragraph, begins as this book ends.

Martha Dodd is the daughter of William E. Dodd, Hugh Wilson's predecessor as Ambassador to Germany.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
CRADLED IN MURDER *Rudd Fleming* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Quadruple murder in pathological Louisiana family solved in frenzied fashion by desperately inquisitive young teacher.	Blood-curdling horror story complete with all ghastly details, including miscegenation, psychopathic didoes, and not a little good writing.	Nightmarish
MURDER CALLS DR. HAILEY *Anthony Wynne* (Lippincott: $2.)	Did the King of Daro die of pneumonia? If so, who shot him? Rubicund Dr. Hailey answers question.	Graustarkian intrigue gets in way of mystery at times but action is swift and Dr. Hailey suavely impressive.	So-so
THE MANDARIN'S SAPPHIRE *Dwight Marfield* (Dutton: $2.)	Wicked old sea-dog slain in eerie Hudson Valley mansion. Crete Monroe helps cops fix identity of vengeful killer.	Weasel bats, ferocious great Danes, sinister sapphires, mysterious Orientals, poison pills, and a weirdly interesting solution.	Melodramatic
42 DAYS FOR MURDER *Roger Torrey* (Hillman-Curl: $2.)	Reno rough-necks decimated, if not erased, by slugs from gat of Shean Connell, piano-pounding private dick.	Shortage of mystery recompensed by tough talk, lurid trips into Western sub-underworld, and gun-play.	Blutwurst
TRUTH COMES LIMPING *J. J. Connington* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Down-at-heel writer slain on lonely British hillside. Sir C. Driffield and Insp. Wendover join forces to solve killing.	Almost too mild British blend of homicide, toxophily, blackmail, unquiet family skeletons, much talk—and a few exciting scenes.	Disappointing

Thunder to the South

BOUNDARIES, POSSESSIONS, AND CONFLICTS IN SOUTH AMERICA. By Gordon Ireland. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1938. $4.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES A. THOMSON

TO a world startled anew by war's alarms, Professor Ireland presents a cool and impartial study of South America's boundary disputes. For the first time the factual history of these controversies is brought together in one volume. Twenty-six disputes are reviewed, and in addition the book provides historical notes on nineteen island possessions, and an analysis of the bipartite and multipartite arbitration treaties entered into by the ten South American nations.

Boundary disputes growing out of the vague limits laid down for the Spanish and Portuguese colonies have been a major cause for differences among the states of the southern continent. While few of these disagreements have led to war, the history of attempts at adjustment affords only limited ground for optimistic conclusions. Special treaties between 1878 and 1925 provided for bilateral arbitration over eleven boundaries. Of these arbitrations "two were unfinished; seven adopted nearly or wholly the line of one of the disputants and four drew mainly a compromise line." Despite these achievements, boundary differences during this period brought on "a war, several near-wars, armed clashes, diplomatic incidents, and severing of relations over frontier questions." The author arrives at the cautious conclusion that "not too much faith, therefore, should be placed in the power of arbitration treaties to avert or adjust boundary disputes."

The work represents a vast amount of research and enormous industry in com-

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pilation. Maps are included covering each dispute. The story of the controversy between Bolivia and Paraguay over the Chaco Boreal illustrates the virtues and defects of the author's method of treatment. He offers a carefully collected chronological catalogue of facts. But the catalogue combines military moves, diplomatic steps, political events, summaries of accords and treaties, each with its date, but all recorded seriatim with no attempt at tracing of trends or at logical classification. The book will have main value as a reference work. Its appeal is not to the general reader but to the specialist, who will be grateful both for the author's text and for the voluminous array of original sources listed in the footnotes.

Charles A. Thomson is on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association.

Romantic Marie

FAREWELL 'TOINETTE. By Bertita Harding. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

MARIE ANTOINETTE, on her way to France and one of history's more unfortunate marriages, stopped at Stuttgart for a day or two. She traveled with her brother Joseph, Emperor of Austria, who at that stage in his career was not averse to playing the democratic monarch. According to one tradition, Joseph and his sister refused the Duke of Württemberg's offer of hospitality in Stuttgart, planning instead to enjoy the freedom of the best local inn. Hastily the Duke converted his castle into a hostelry and disguised himself as a tavern-keeper, while his stolid spouse Frederica posed as hostess. The young Austrians, at first unaware of the trick, amused themselves mightily, and the Dauphiness, about to be engulfed in the exquisite and fatal artificiality of Versailles, did not regret this taste of Teutonic gaiety even after the Duke's identity had been disclosed.

On this slender thread of excuse, Miss Harding has strung together a number of disconnected historical charades and character sketches of Hapsburg and Bourbon life, now with Maria Theresa in Vienna, now awaiting the deluge with old Louis XV and his four unattractive maiden daughters. Some of these little portraits and stories are successfully outlined in the author's spirited style, which seldom hesitates to sacrifice historical accuracy for the sake of an epigram. In many cases, however, they seem so much padding designed to fill out a book conspicuously short on plot, for after setting her Stuttgart stage attractively the author permits little to take place on it. For a moment Miss Harding seems on the verge of giving us a romance in the musical comedy manner between the young Archduchess and a handsome postilion who is really a German princeling in disguise. But nothing happens, and in the end the book must be set down as a brief and facile *chronique scandaleuse* of court life, neither fiction, history, nor good red biography. It may provide mild entertainment, however, for those who like to take their history in harmless sugarcoated doses.

The Navy in Action

THE NAVY: A HISTORY. THE STORY OF A SERVICE IN ACTION. By Fletcher Pratt. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1938. $4.

Reviewed by C. P. STACEY

THE United States Navy has been much in the headlines of late, and one would welcome an analytical history of American naval policy which might assist the citizen in making up his mind on the issues which have occasioned so much shouting. It is therefore a bit disappointing to find that in this volume Mr. Pratt has stayed strictly within the limits implied in his sub-title. His book is primarily a history of the Navy's battles and the manner in which they formed the traditions of the service; he is more interested in cutlasses and carronades than in administration, appropriations, and the bases of policy; and as he adds little to our knowledge, the most we can say for him is that he has contributed another readable account to the literature already existing on a well-worn theme. The brilliance of the old story cannot be entirely dimmed by familiarity; and (except for those moments when his style strives so hard for effect that it slips into pure artificiality) Mr. Pratt tells it rather well.

There is not much "original research" in the book. It is based chiefly upon the standard authors—men like Mahan, Allen, and Chapelle—and occasionally even one of these is omitted; there is, for instance, no reference to Baxter's classic "Introduction of the Ironclad Warship." The author gives the methods of academic scholarship short shrift. He has avoided, he remarks, "those annoying little numbers that disfigure the text of so many books." He gives us, in fact, very few references, and these in only the most general form, devoid of dates and page numbers.

The details of the text, moreover, are not always reliable. Mahan's most famous sentence is misquoted; the Oregon treaty is once antedated by four years; and Patterson's attack on the pirate nest at Barataria is placed *after* the battle of New Orleans instead of before it. (This last slip, film-goers will recognize, has the effect of rendering Mr. Pratt's accuracy inferior to that of Mr. Cecil B. de Mille, which is hard on any historian.) At times the author takes leave of history altogether, and draws on imagination: the worst example, perhaps, being his assertion that the astonishing speed developed in 1869 by the *Wampanoag* prevented a war with England. "This was the moment—peace or war? Not too much to say that the issue hung on that cast. If she could do fourteen knots it would give the British pause. . . ." To students of British policy this discovery will come as something of a shock. These things go far to deprive the book of permanent value.

Nationalism is chronic in military and naval historians of all countries, and if Mr. Pratt's book tends a little towards the Rover Boy type we must not be too hard on him. Yet some people will be surprised to find him writing of the reaction to the destruction of the *Maine*, "the people have a curiously sure instinct in such matters; whosoever [*sic*] the blame for the immediate overt act, the true fault lay with Spain." Some people too will feel that at the end the book comes dangerously close to lapsing into mere big-navy propaganda, and that the geographical isolation of the United States is at least worthy of consideration in determinating the country's naval policies. However, these things may not greatly affect the public reception of the book. The only persons likely to take exception to it are two classes for whom the author evinces no great respect: the academic historical scholars, with their pedantic cult of accuracy, and the people who think that the United States doesn't need a bigger navy.

C. P. Stacey is on the history faculty of Princeton University.

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The New Books

Belles Lettres

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF VERSE. By Robert Hillyer. Boston: The Writer, Inc. 1938. $2.

As a primer for undergraduate versifiers or as a manual for the ladies who report on Slim Volumes at the Monday afternoon meetings of the Pennons of Pegasus Literary Club, this short book, by the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric in Harvard University, fulfils a certain need. It is a minor need—Professor Hillyer seems sometimes to forget how minor it is—and the brief essays on technical matters are, in their unassuming practicality, nicely adjusted to it. Everything is clear, careful, and above all, simple. There are analyses of various forms—the sonnet, for instance, and the couplet; metric and rime are defined and illustrated; there is a short discussion of diction, with a list of words-not-to-be-used (*e.g.*, eternity) and examples of jaded rimes (*love-above, desire-fire,* etc.); and there is a detailed class-room dissection of student verses, presumably submitted in the author's course in versification. All this has its value, and Professor Hillyer writes with an urbanity that makes for pleasant reading. If he had been content with this, no more need be said. But the book also attempts to state an esthetic and to set up a critical standard; and the result is not happy. For all his assertion of the importance of poetry, the author treats it as a decorative accomplishment, an aristocratic Art, divorced from reality, having no perceptible social function. The book would have been better if the author had confined himself to the discussion of technique. Criticism demands more sympathy, less academic insularity, than one finds here.

D. F.

Biography

COURAGE! By Mary Lindsey. Dutton. 1938. $2.

The Lindseys were, some twenty-odd years ago, prosperous, highly intelligent, rather advanced young people. They were more than a little pleased with themselves, for they had shaken off old creeds and conventions. They had produced a fine son and had fine traditions in which to bring him up. Then they planned to have a daughter, which they did, efficiently and on schedule. With Anne's birth the well-ordered pattern snapped off. For Anne was a cripple from before birth. Her case is rare in medical records. It is a congenital bone condition, producing multiple fractures for which no cure is known. Alternately despairing of and hoping for the child's life, the Lindseys went from pediatrist to orthopedist and Anne changed her residence from cast to brace and back to cast again. Her mother's book is a record of Anne's development as a person, an individual of more than average intelligence whose body survived a terrific handicap and whose spirit completely surmounted it.

The problem of Anne's happiness was a more difficult one, in many ways, than her medical care. It must not be the specious happiness of a pampered invalid; and Mrs. Lindsey tells how she helped the little girl to develop normal interests. That Anne was exceptionally keen of mind was obvious from the beginning. Her curiosity, her love of pets, her aptitude in water (which was kind to her weakness) and her interest in the orphan baby Sandy, who was adopted after Anne had discovered him during one of her hospital experiences, and who became one of her major preoccupations —all of these external factors kept her childhood free of professional invalidism. Later she determined on a college education, and had it, with distinction.

Mrs. Lindsey's own growth in tolerance and understanding goes along with Anne's years. From a complacent, rather dogmatic woman who knew what she wanted from life and had always received it, she became, if not exactly humble, at least more humble, and, we fancy, much more likable. It is not strange that she is conscious of her own development.

R. L.

Fiction

EACH ONE WAS ALONE. By Donald Barr Chidsey. Knopf. 1938. $2.50.

Mr. Chidsey has stranded on a Pacific island an agreeable if commonplace group of American tourists, and left them to mingle with the few resident Europeans, thereby demonstrating that one must choose one's company as carefully for a tropical as for a desert island. The result is a series of little half-hearted dramas of adultery, of unrequited love, of communist demonstration, of adventure in the jungle. The actors are with one solitary exception rescued before the reader becomes seriously concerned over their sufferings.

Neatly and fluently written, "Each One Was Alone" is pleasant summer reading, to which it is perhaps unfair to apply the more rigorous standards of the mud season.

K. S.

THE MAN WHO INSULTED SOMERSVILLE. By Jennings Rice. Harpers. 1938. $2.50.

Mr. Rice's opening idea is brilliant—the arrival in a small town of an unknown corpse sent to the care of the new minister with directions to hunt up the seemingly non-existent relatives and bury it in the unknown family lot. But after this excellent beginning, the novel settles into a jog-trot exposé of the humors, the scandal, and the eccentricities of small town life, striking in somewhere between "Main Street" and "The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg," which in certain respects it oddly parallels.

The blurb writer has been cruelly unfair to the book. He calls it "a shrewd, delightfully gay novel of a subtle revenge." Mr. Rice has written a novel of average merit, but to say that dying intestate in the full knowledge that your estate will set your forgotten relatives by the ears is "subtle revenge" is surely to misuse language. Mr. Rice tells most of the book in conversation so accurately reported that it is flat; if this be "delightfully gay," Robert Nathan is the author of "Daniel Deronda."

Mr. Rice's strategy in writing "The Man Who Insulted Somersville" is right; his tactics are at fault. He has carefully planned his story. He meant it to open out fanwise, the reader following the enlightenment of the minister as the clergyman learns the ramifications of events and the intricacies of family and extra-legal relationships. But the book does not move. It is logy with superfluous conversations, with episodes which mostly are announced as "surprising," and with revelations which the reader has anticipated. The slow, flat prose rises only occasionally into liveliness. Mr. Rice is, however, an observer of men and manners, more particularly of certain types of women, and there is enough good material badly used in the book to justify the belief that in a subsequent novel he may succeed in clearing out the underbrush in order that we may see the trees.

H. M. J.

RUN MASKED. By Robb White. Knopf. 1938. $2.50.

The general demoralization of white men in the tropics is a fiction that makes popular reading. It seems the authors themselves can but rarely believe that those who degenerate on a hot island are only those who would do so at home. Robb White, while filling his novel with a fine selection of drunkards, lechers, homosexuals, and thieves, strikes a balance with Hancock, the angry philanthropist, and Stuart, who lives ascetically with the Creole Sylvia. The incidental characters form a pattern of rubbish against which the story moves. The pattern is well drawn, but the story, though often intense, moves unsurely.

When John Hancock settled on the Caribbean island it was the scene of opera bouffe politics, of colonial injustice, and a rankling enmity between the white man and the black. The jungle, climate, and people were hostile. The lives of the latter progressed to desperation until the day of the yearly carnival, when in one way and another they were each fulfilled.

That was the day when the natives were permitted to run masked through the streets, dancing and singing and insulting those who oppressed them with an alien Law. The hysteria spread to the tourist ship and the villages of the deepest jungle. While the Nortons on the hill were waiting to discover whether their child would be born white or black, suicide and murder ran masked through the island. Rebellion ensued, a vicious horror that crawled through Caribia as futilely as most of the inhabitants. Stuart and Sylvia alone achieved any sort of triumph.

There is plenty of excitement in this first novel, a vivid scene, and a cast of characters so complex that one must admire the author's restraint in handling their conflicting dramas as well as he does. Only when his white people attempt "sophisticated" conversation do they seem

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unreal—an author's actors—whereas the native dialogue, that humorous patois of English, is excellent, for Mr. White knows the natives and loves them, unlike their "marsters," with neither pity nor scorn. The undertones of the island are deftly suggested; the African pulse is audible, and the atmosphere of suspense and menace is well sustained.

H. D.

O'MARA. By Laurence Greene. Bobbs-Merrill. 1938. $2.

Fortunately for the newspaper business, for the general public, for his wife and family, for his friends and neighbors, and possibly even for the future of mankind—the sort of newspaperman represented by the hero of Mr. Greene's novel is fast becoming a legendary figure. You can isolate him here and there throughout the country. You can still find him throwing typewriters out of windows, socking city editors, telling off his publishers, batting out paragraphs of imperishable copy between slugs of rye whisky, living among scenes of porcine squalor. But you will have to look hard for him. He is a vanishing American en route to his logical destination, the land of popular fiction. The fact is the newspaper business can't afford him any longer. It can get imperishable copy at less cost.

Anyway, O'Mara is the kind of newspaperman Mr. Greene has chosen to write about, and not too convincingly. He has made him a man with a philosophical chip on his shoulder trying to preserve his individuality in a regimented world. This might be all right if his individuality consisted of anything but getting stiff with alcohol, a fierce hatred of fairly innocent conventions, and a permanent emotional restlessness. Mr. Greene, on the other hand, tries to invest him with a kind of Promethean martyrdom—tells you that the O'Maras of the world are victims of an inevitable Direction. Personally we do not believe it, and we don't think many other readers will, either.

R. S.

LOST SPRINGTIME. By Julian Dana. Macmillan. 1938. $2.50.

Julian Dana (or at least the "I" of this story, in which, as is customary, "all characters and events narrated are fictional") had trouble one fine spring day in finishing his biography of the San Francisco banker Ralston, and so he turned for a vacation to an isolated lake in the Sierra Nevadas, where time and the mundane world were dead realities lost in the shadows of a constant noon. As companions he took Mr. Chester Dillaby, a fat, shiny-pated, waddling Casper Milquetoast of a man, with astounding moments of ingenuity and bravery, and a French bulldog named Henry, who (one could never say which), in his own way, is quite as astounding as his master.

Mr. Dana's charmingly fantastic idyll has a moral purpose behind it, for we learn that time and the ordinary logic of the world are without significance when our lives are ruled by the springtime of happiness. Everybody has a lost cherished springtime in his heart to warm him like a rich cloak during hard winters. The author's springtime is the vacation in the Sierras with Henry and Mr. Dillaby, and another springtime of equal symbolic value is the youth of the author's grandmother, whose biography is told in a lengthy story framed by the immediate events. Because of its symbolic pattern, this novel is a curious combination. First there is the story of the author, Mr. Dillaby, and the dog Henry, who is quite capable of speech when removed from the real world's winter. Then comes a four-chapter interruption of a very realistic group who cross their trail in the high Sierras, and then the body of the book, which one never feels to be its main part, the autobiography of the author's grandmother. Taken as a whole, the novel is somewhat disturbing, because of the unsatisfactory fusion of its parts, but in each of those it is admirable. One would like more of this successful recreation of the flamboyant days of early California, and one would like more of Henry; each is good enough for a book of its own.

J. D. H.

SPEAKING DUST. By E. Thornton Cook. Scribner's. 1938. $2.50.

Mrs. Cook's biographical novel of the courtship and married life of Jane and Thomas Carlyle abounds in splashes of local color and literary allusion. Scottish rustics speak their rich dialect, if a little self-consciously; innumerable celebrities manage to make a brief appearance, if a little obtrusively. Above all, there is a lavish spread of literary high talk. When Jane (quite irrelevantly) asks her husband for news of Coleridge, Carlyle assures her that "he is sunk inextricably in the depths of putrescent indolence." And Jane is pretty articulate herself. "I wish to God," she exclaims in one of the love passages, "the alacrity of your execution were equal to the boldness of your projects!" Mrs. Cook works in many sentences taken from the letters and journals, dutifully affixing the conventional tags of dialogue—the characters urge, vow, wail, affirm gravely, add hoarsely, cry stormily. But the illusion does not quite come off: the whole performance is a bit stagey.

It is not, however, particularly dramatic. Although the married life of the Carlyles was notoriously stormy, the storms here seem like occasional showers in a quaint pastoral scene. Mrs. Cook dwells on Carlyle's famous dyspepsia, his gloom, his egotism, his labor pains as an artist, and all the eccentricities that make genius a difficult thing to have around the house. She also at least suggests the sickly jealousies, resentments, and fears that made Jane herself difficult. But she does not get really deep into the mind of either; she makes the strange, complex, haunting drama of their life together more picturesque than moving. For one thing, she shies away from the morbid elements of this drama, such as Jane's addiction to morphia and the question of Carlyle's impotence. Ultimately, however, the reason this is not a profounder book is simply that she does not profoundly know her characters.

Yet there is no need of a solemn analysis or severe judgment of so unpretentious and harmless a work. It is superficial but not sentimental, and its surface is bright as well as faithful in detail.

H. J. M.

Miscellaneous

FIFTY SOUTH TO FIFTY SOUTH. By Warwick M. Tompkins. Norton. 1938. $3.

Only two small boats are known to have made the voyage around the Horn, and second of these being *Wander Bird*, an eighty-five-foot pilot boat, the record of whose trip is contained in this book. It is the story of a remarkable achievement, told in a careful and complete manner which will interest all amateurs of blue water sailing. The many illustrations are unusually good, and the varied information in the appendices almost amounts to a small reference library on what one needs for serious cruising. The actual narrative is harmed by the writer's florid style, including the old-fashioned classical apostrophe to readers and to various individuals, terminating in exclamation points. This fault is not serious enough to prevent the book from becoming a classic in its field.

O. LaF.

NAVAL ODYSSEY. By Thomas Woodrooffe. Sheridan House. 1938. $2.50.

Or, "The Yangtse Skipper in the Mediterranean," promising or threatening to turn into an epic as extended as that which chronicled the adventures of Frank during the Civil War. Mr. Woodrooffe writes for adults, and has both a sense of humor and an eye for observation that Mr. Castleman lacked; and he was present at some strange and exciting transactions, notably the evacuation of Smyrna

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when the Turks threw the Greeks out of their country, and a passage of arms a little later when Mustapha Kemal was the distance of a mistaken order from blowing the cruiser on which Mr. Woodrooffe served into scrap iron. His book is easy, conversational, urbane, humane, more concerned with incident and scene than with character. F. P.

THE CHINESE PEOPLE. By George H. Danton. Marshall Jones. 1938. $3.50.

The ten years which Dr. George H. Danton spent in China as head of the German department of the National Tsing Hun University gave him a rare opportunity to study the country and the people. This book, with its keen and scholarly analysis of Chinese ethnology, language, education, etc., will give any student of Chinese affairs a new point of view and perhaps lead him to a reconsideration of old conclusions. There are few conclusions or expressions of opinion in it, for Dr. Danton, with a scholarship which is rare in these days, examines his material with such meticulous care that he ends by doubting the authenticity of most of it. While finding fault with many authorities, he falls into the very human error of placing a good deal of emphasis on isolated incidents which come under his own observation. This attitude of mind is further reflected in the constant use of words which are strange to the average reader. The book is not easy reading, but those who do read it will find plenty of mental exercise.

C. C.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientèle; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of The Saturday Review. Rates: 7 cents per word, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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RUSSIA IS OUT and so is middle Europe, if you want to travel abroad without fear of internment. I am taking a small group of SRL readers to England, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, sailing "Empress of Britain," July ninth, all expenses $475. Emphasis on recreation and social interpretation, not tripping. Would you like more details? Hugh MacLennan, Lower Canada College, Montreal.

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YOUNG WOMAN FROM FAR SIDE OF MOON finds sparkle missing in Manhattan. Is the whole world tired? Box 608-C.

YOUNG LADY would like position as tutor-companion for younger girls during summer. Can teach sailing and other sports. Also do secretarial work. References exchanged. Box 685, Charleston S. C.

TO SUBLET, June to October, furnished apartment near East River. Coolness and privacy for two people. Regent 4-6381.

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FOR RENT, Furnished house, East River view: nine high-ceilinged rooms, two baths, shady garden. Low summer rental. Maxwell Aley, 510 East 89th Street, Manhattan. Box 627-C.

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YOUNG COLLEGE GRADUATE wishes correspondence with Catholic girl. Box 614-C.

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Double-Crostics: No. 212

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-M	2-H	3-B	4-N	■	5-Q	6-J	■	7-P	8-O	9-C	10-Q	11-L	12-V	13-J	■	14-A	15-F
16-W	■	17-E	18-A	19-C	■	20-G	21-E	22-P	■	23-Z	24-R	25-N	26-V	27-F	■	28-U	29-M
30-K	31-Z	32-I	33-H	34-S	35-L	■	36-E	37-D	■	38-X	39-G	40-A	41-C	■	42-E	43-Y	44-K
45-R	■	46-E	47-J	48-Q	■	49-T	50-I	51-Y	52-V	53-O	54-F	55-M	56-H	57-G	■	58-U	59-I
60-K	61-N	62-B	■	63-H	64-C	65-U	66-F	67-P	■	68-K	69-J	70-D	71-T	■	72-S	73-Q	74-X
75-R	76-I	77-K	■	78-T	79-B	80-G	81-U	82-W	83-M	■	84-T	85-J	86-L	87-A	■	88-F	89-G
90-R	91-Z	■	92-G	93-T	94-I	95-J	96-H	■	97-D	98-A	99-I	100-Q	■	101-R	102-Z	103-B	104-E
■	105-J	106-Q	107-V	■	108-S	109-G	110-O	■	111-D	112-A	■	113-T	114-E	115-P	■	116-L	117-J
118-E	■	119-O	120-M	121-W	122-P	■	123-Q	124-E	125-X	■	126-S	127-I	128-T	129-K	130-D	■	131-N
132-A	■	133-D	134-H	135-F	136-G	■	137-B	138-Q	139-C	■	140-S	141-C	142-Z	143-B	144-V	145-M	■
146-H	■	147-S	148-D	149-W	150-B	■	151-H	152-T	■	153-Z	154-A	155-B	156-M	■	157-E	■	158-Y
159-U	160-O	161-F	162-I	163-H	164-E	■	165-N	166-M	167-Y	168-T	169-R	■	170-J	171-H	172-T	■	173-X
174-O	175-I	176-M	177-R	178-N	■	179-B	180-X	181-V	182-A	183-Y	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 17 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Lack of mutual attraction.

B. Aggressive.

C. Inclined the head.

D. Iroquois Indians, formerly living in New York.

E. Cemented together.

F. Bantering (slang).

G. Soft, wet, miry ground.

H. Thoughtless.

I. Capable of knowing without reasoning.

J. Scheherazade's sultan husband.

K. Recites in a rolling voice.

L. Ancestor of Hittites (Bible).

M. Found; establish.

N. Engulfing depth of misery or sin.

O. Plan; purpose.

P. Manger; stop undesiredly.

Q. Anglo-Saxon prince or nobleman.

R. Without a halt, as in a journey.

S. Most singular.

T. Spanish inquisitor general (1420-1498).

U. Intimations.

V. Salad herb, related to chicory.

W. Blushing.

X. Trifle with a person or matter.

Y. Prone to servile imitation.

Z. Jaundiced.

WORDS

14 40 112 132 154 18 98 182 87

137 179 155 79 103 62 3 143 150

64 9 41 139 141 19

133 111 130 148 97 70 37

17 104 164 114 42 21 36 124 157 46 118

54 15 88 161 66 135 27

92 109 39 57 80 20 89 136

63 56 151 2 134 163 96 146 171 33

94 32 76 50 59 99 162 175 127

6 95 47 105 117 13 69 170 85

129 30 44 60 68 77

11 86 116 35

55 83 145 1 176 29 120 156 166

4 61 131 25 178 165

174 160 110 53 8 119

22 122 7 115 67

123 10 100 48 138 5 106 73

177 24 45 101 169 90 75

108 126 147 72 140 34

84 152 168 49 93 71 78 128 172 113

58 159 81 65 28

144 26 107 181 52 12

149 82 121 16

125 180 38 173 74

167 43 51 158 183

23 31 153 142 102 91

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

OF many interesting comments received from our readers about "A Bookman's Idea of the United States" (cover of our Spring Number, April 2), we take pleasure in printing a letter from Richard M. Kain, assistant professor of English at Ohio Wesleyan University. Mr. Kain writes:

"The interesting cover on the Spring Announcement number may give a picture of where book sales are largest, but not of the relative proportion of book buyers to population. It is a map of the Bookseller's America, and not of the book reader's America. New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Ohio together comprise one quarter of the nation's population; they comprise such a large potential market that less populous states have no chance for proportional representation. How could Nevada, with only .08 per cent of the population, expect to share much more than .07 per cent of the book sales? Your map may provide a good index of sales, but it distorts the correct view of the reading habits of America and tends to cast aspersions of illiteracy upon states which do not deserve it.

"In calculating the ratio of sales to population, some interesting changes of perspective take place. The states west of the Mississippi emerge from their infinitesimal shape. On the other hand the populous eastern states must shrink in proportion. The southern states alone remain unchanged.

"A revised map, were it to be drawn, would not appear quite so much like the facetious map of the New Yorker's idea of America, published in *The Saturday Review of Literature* a year and a half ago. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the ratio of book sales to population is that the reading public is not entirely coincident with the concentrated centers of population. The states which have their fair share of the book trade number fully half of the forty-eight, and would have to be drawn full size. In other words, readers of new books are nation-wide, even though only five states account for 60 per cent of the book sales."

☞Mr. Kain's calculations appear in the table at the bottom of these columns. ☞In reply to him and to other correspondents, it should be said that our map was drawn to give a picture, not to present a thesis. ☞The new ratios which include population figures are interesting, but immediately raise another question—if population is considered, shouldn't literacy figures also enter in? A map of book distribution by states in relation to literacy figures would certainly make the southern states appear larger. ☞If Mr. Kain, or any one else, wants to make such a table, this department will be glad to print it.

☞In *Tide*, the advertising trade paper, we spotted a report from the York Street Flax Spinning Company's advertising agent which reads,

> To depart from the usual floral and geometric pattern treatment on printed linen handkerchiefs for women, this firm went to books for their ideas—and chose a group of popular "best sellers." As you will note, each handkerchief tells a story and completely captures the spirit of the book from which it was taken. The books used were, "And So—Victoria" by Vaughan Wilkins, "Katrina" by Sally Salminen, "The Nutmeg Tree" by Margery Sharp, and "The Flowering of New England" by Van Wyck Brooks.

Q. would like to see the spirit of *The Flowering of New England* on a linen handkerchief, and will undertake to review any book-handkerchiefs received.

☞The Harper Prize Novel Competition, 1938-39, has just been announced. Manuscripts must be in by Feb. 1, 1939. The prize is $7,500—$2,000 outright plus $5,500 minimum guarantee on royalties. The judges are Louis Bromfield, Josephine W. Johnson, and Bernard DeVoto. Any U. S. citizen "who has not published a novel in book form prior to January 1, 1924," is eligible to compete.

Per Acre or Per Capita?

STATE	RATIO: SALES TO AREA	RATIO: SALES TO POPULATION
Alabama	1 to 4	1 to 5
Arizona	1 to 10	1 to 1
Arkansas	1 to 5	1 to 3
California	2 to 1	2¼ to 1
Colorado	1 to 5	1 to 1
Connecticut	13 to 1	2 to 1
Delaware	2½ to 1	2 to 1
Dist. of Columbia	300 to 1	3 to 1
Florida	2 to 5	1 to 1
Georgia	2 to 5	1 to 3
Idaho	1 to 20	1 to 3
Illinois	3½ to 1	1⅓ to 1
Indiana	1½ to 1	1½ to 1
Iowa	2 to 3	1 to 1½
Kansas	1 to 3	1 to 2
Kentucky	2 to 5	1 to 4
Louisiana	1 to 5	1 to 5
Maine	3 to 5	1 to 1
Maryland	2⅓ to 1	3 to 4
Massachusetts	20 to 1	2 to 1
Michigan	2 to 1	1 to 1
Minnesota	1 to 2	3 to 4
Mississippi	1 to 10	1 to 8
Missouri	4 to 5	1 to 1½
Montana	1 to 10	3 to 4
Nebraska	1 to 4	6 to 10
Nevada	1 to 50	1 to 1
New Hampshire	1⅔ to 1	1⅓ to 1
New Jersey	14 to 1	1 to 1
New Mexico	1 to 25	1 to 2
New York	18⅔ to 1	3 to 1
North Carolina	2 to 5	1 to 4
North Dakota	1 to 10	1 to 2
Ohio	3 to 1	4 to 5
Oklahoma	1 to 5	1 to 4
Oregon	1 to 6	1 to 1½
Pennsylvania	4⅔ to 1	1 to 1
Rhode Island	13¼ to 1	1 to 1
South Carolina	1 to 4	1 to 4
South Dakota	1 to 10	1 to 2
Tennessee	1 to 2	1 to 3
Texas	1 to 6	1 to 3
Utah	1 to 10	1 to 2
Vermont	1 to 1	1⅓ to 1
Virginia	2 to 3	1 to 2
Washington	1 to 2	1 to 1
West Virginia	3 to 4	1 to 2
Wisconsin	1 to 1	1 to 1
Wyoming	1 to 25	1 to 1

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